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Chicago Arts and Communication, 1995

Columbia College Chicago

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CHICAGO
Arts & Communication

The EL
one rider's journal

A visit with theater director Mary Zimmerman

World-class photographer Archie Lieberman

Scenes from a club kid's life

Three famous architects speak out

Fashionably speaking: Chicago designers

55 >
0 74470 79055 6

There are many advantages in being advisor to this magazine. I get to know some of the most talented students at Columbia College: writers, editors, managers, artists, designers. I am able to watch the development of a publication, from the early discussions of article ideas to the transformation of those ideas into actual articles on the way to the finished product. I can be proud when the magazine wins national awards, as it has every year since the first issue, in 1991. This year we've embodied a new collaboration. Cathy Zaccarine's Design for Editors class has provided the art direction for this issue, for the first time. Some students in her class did double-duty as text editors; that's why some of our editors obtained design credit as well and why you will see some of the same names in the editing and design masthead listings.

As usual, a great deal of hard work dominated the process. It amazes me, year after year, that students with full academic loads, outside jobs and other pressures manage to concentrate on the fate of this magazine. One skilled student who worked on this issue has a husband, two children, two part-time jobs and full-time status at the college. Not easy to pull off.

At year's end, when we're ready to go to press, I look back on the year it took to put this together and I marvel at the devotion of all those who work on the magazine. My gratitude remains constant. I've worked in the so-called "real world" and I know how dedicated journalists can be, especially when they are good at what they do and focused about what they want to achieve. When I assess the students who create this magazine, I can see the integrity and motivation and creativity that will serve them well when they enter the "real world." As they succeed, I am moved by their success. it's time to honor those who created this issue. I suspect that they will be brightening journalism's future and I am pleased to have worked with them.

Don Gold

Don Gold
Editorial Advisor

I'm finally seeing this project—which I took on with great pleasure last fall—coming to fruition—in August!

Looking back over the past year (10 months, technically) I know that this staff of *Chicago Arts & Communication* has succeeded in its attempt to show many different perspectives of life—throughout and within—Chicago. In fact we've used that word—perspective—to describe a portfolio of Archie Lieberman's photographs. Through his eye, he has documented life—from President Kennedy to Frank Lloyd Wright to farm life in a western Illinois community.

And throughout the life of this project, each member of the 1995 staff had the opportunity to gain perspective on their goals and career paths for the future. This project encompasses every aspect of magazine publishing from the initial classes when we brain-stormed for story ideas, to editing first and, then, second drafts, to printing proofs and sizing photos as we finalized the pages to send to the printer.

Personally, for me, this project also encompassed every aspect of my college career at Columbia. In June I graduated with an undeclared major—focusing on both aspects of the magazine world: editing and design. With the addition of the Design for Editor's class, the journalism department managed to keep both aspects of this project within one department. It also gave me the opportunity to use every skill I have developed—and then some—in the pursuit to make this the best issue ever. Photographer searches, photo-shoots, photo-searches, design direction, editorial direction, endless computer lab hours and working lunches exhausted every resource I had—every skill I had acquired. What a wonderful feeling I had when Cathy Zaccarine and I printed the last page, packaged the entire issue and finally sent everything to the printer.

For many of this year's staff, this was our last year at Columbia—we graduated in June. But we left behind our signature that is this project—something that every member of the staff, as well as the entire college, can be proud of.

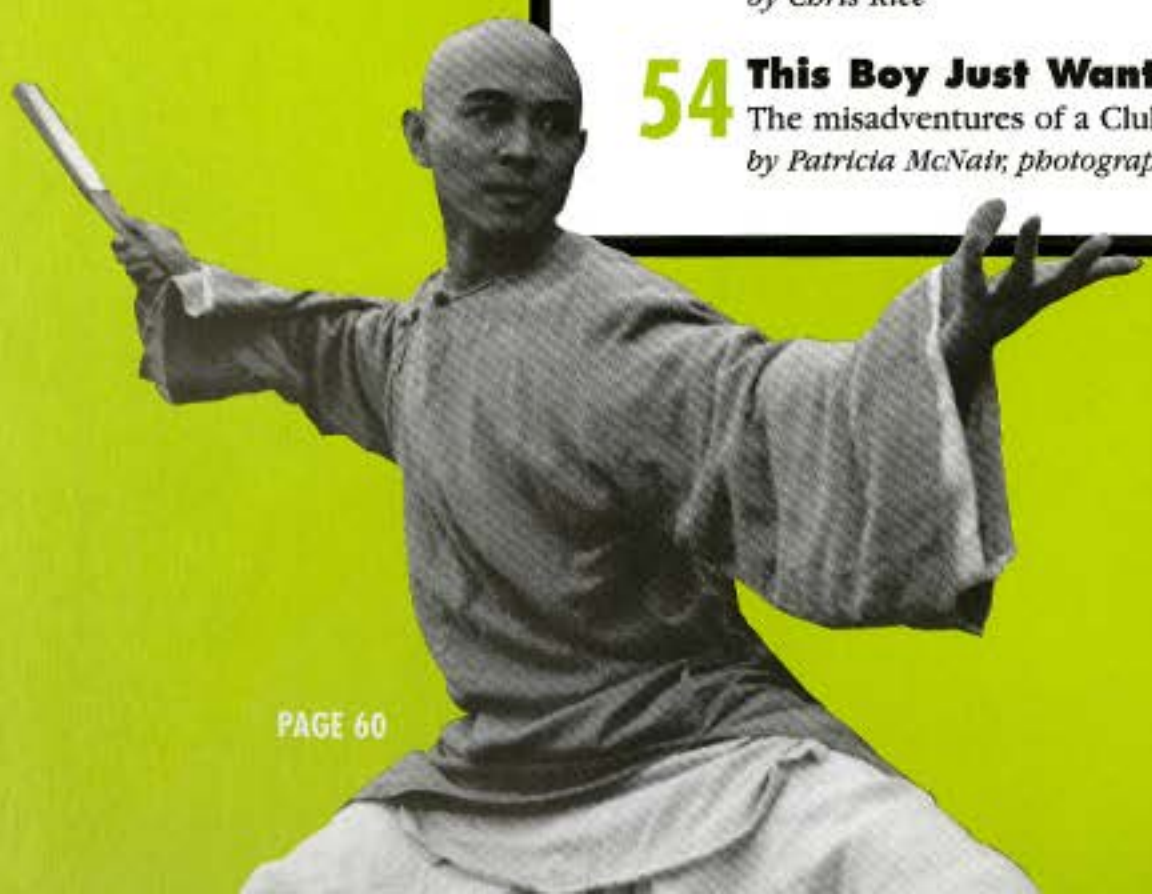
Georgine Panko.

Georgine Panko
Editor-in-Chief/Art Director

CHICAGO

Arts & Communication

PAGE 46



PAGE 60

PAGE 38

cover photo by Chris Sweda

PAGE 54

PAGE 64

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Arts & Communication

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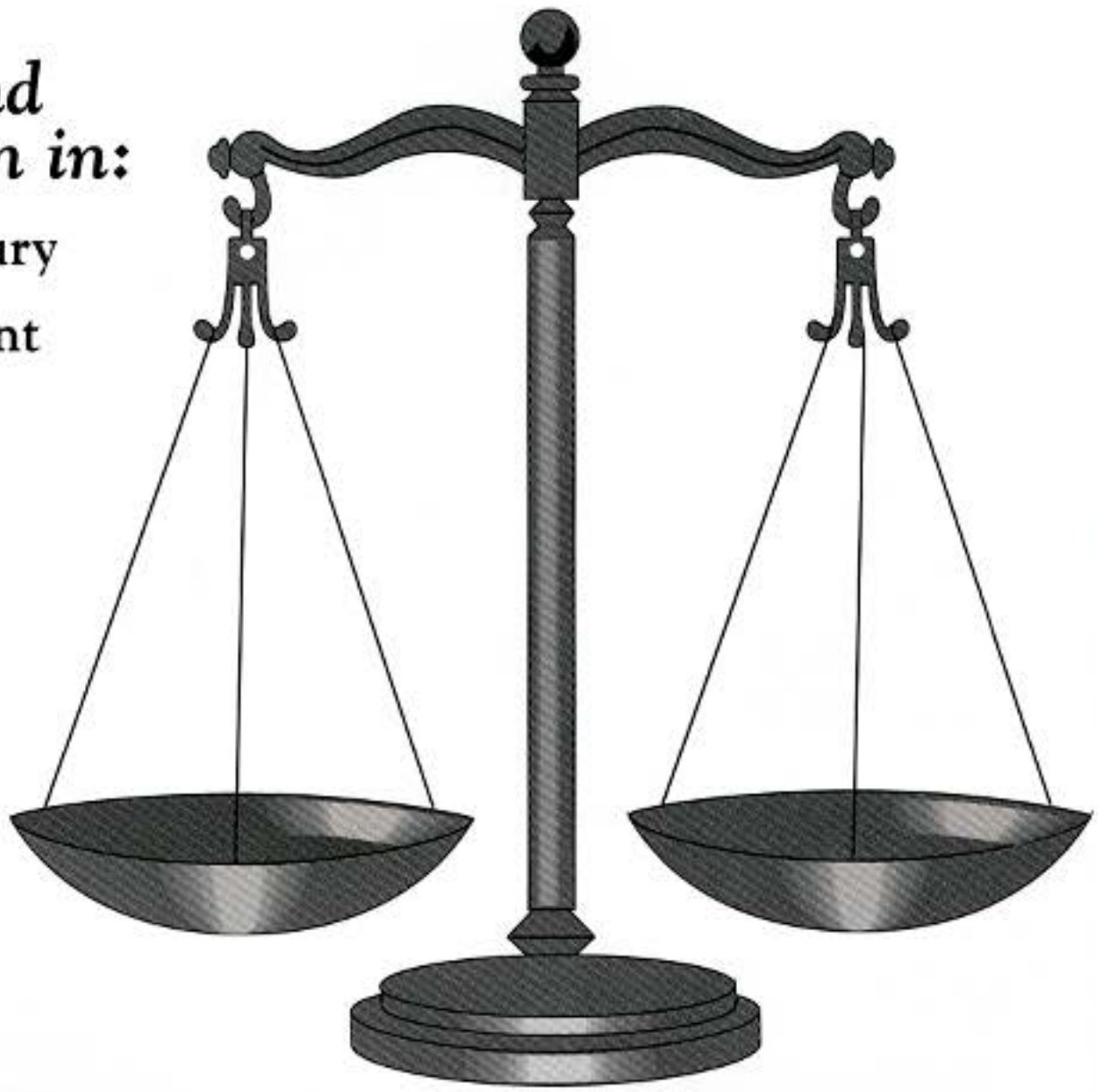

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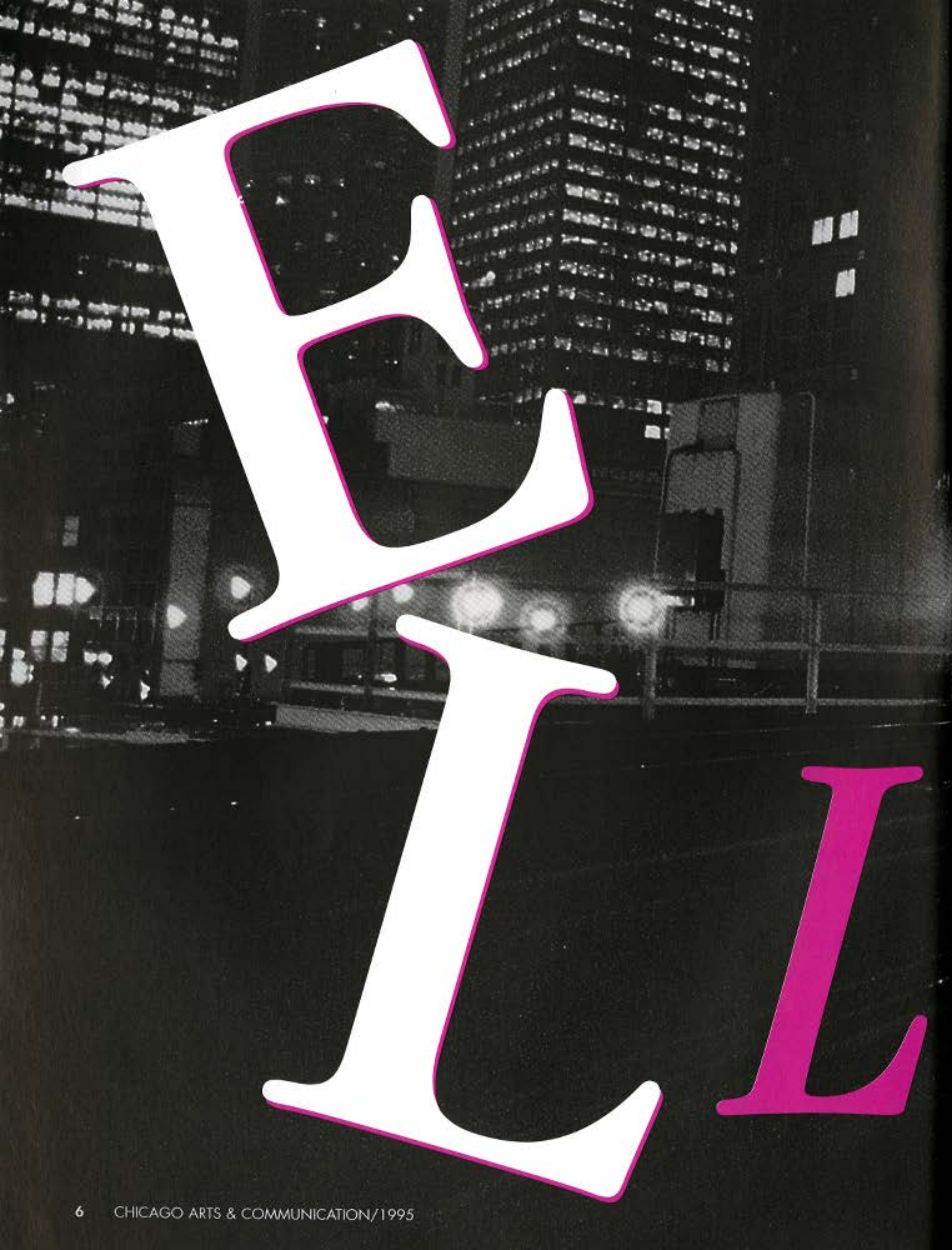
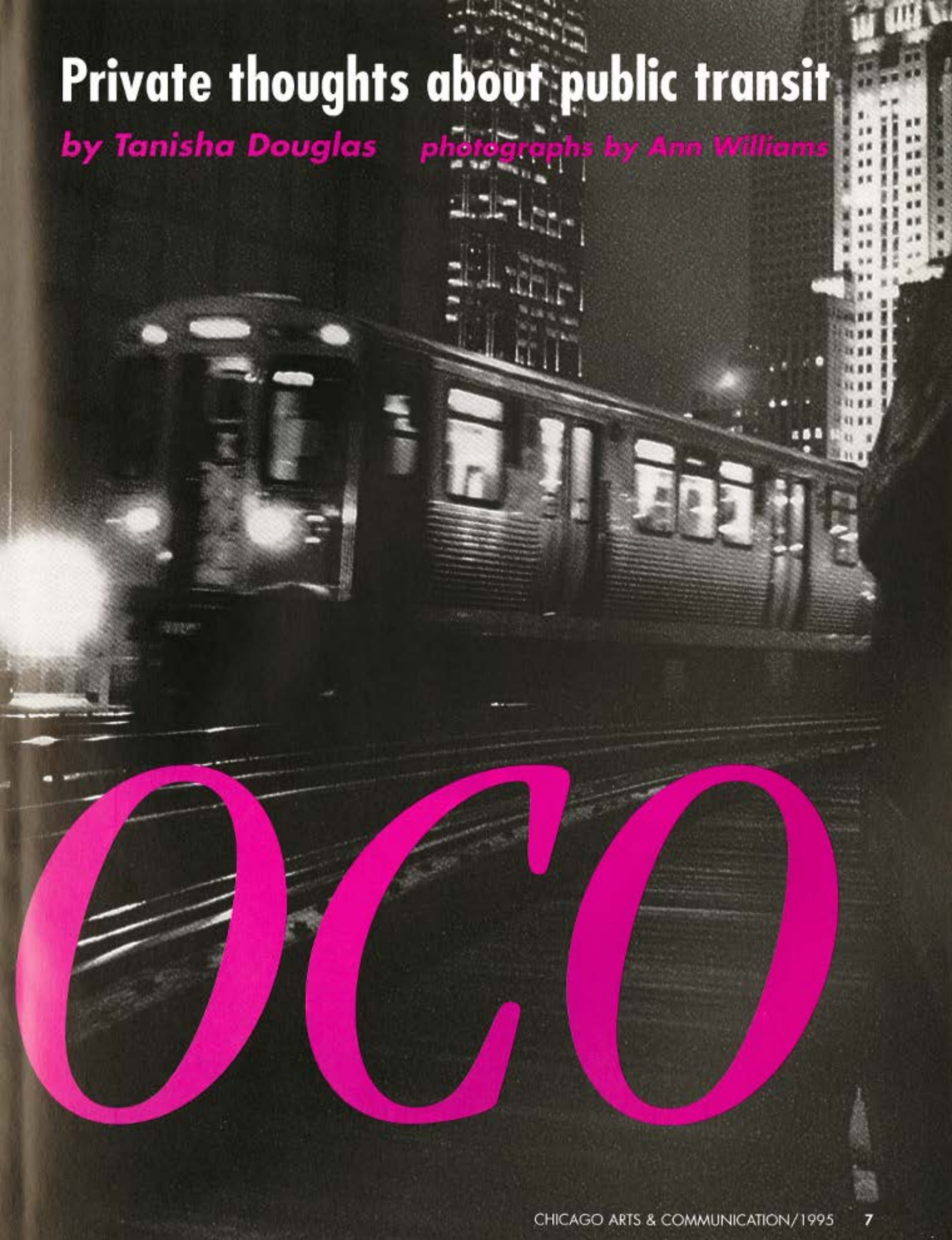

EL

Private thoughts about public transit

by Tanisha Douglas *photographs by Ann Williams*



OCO

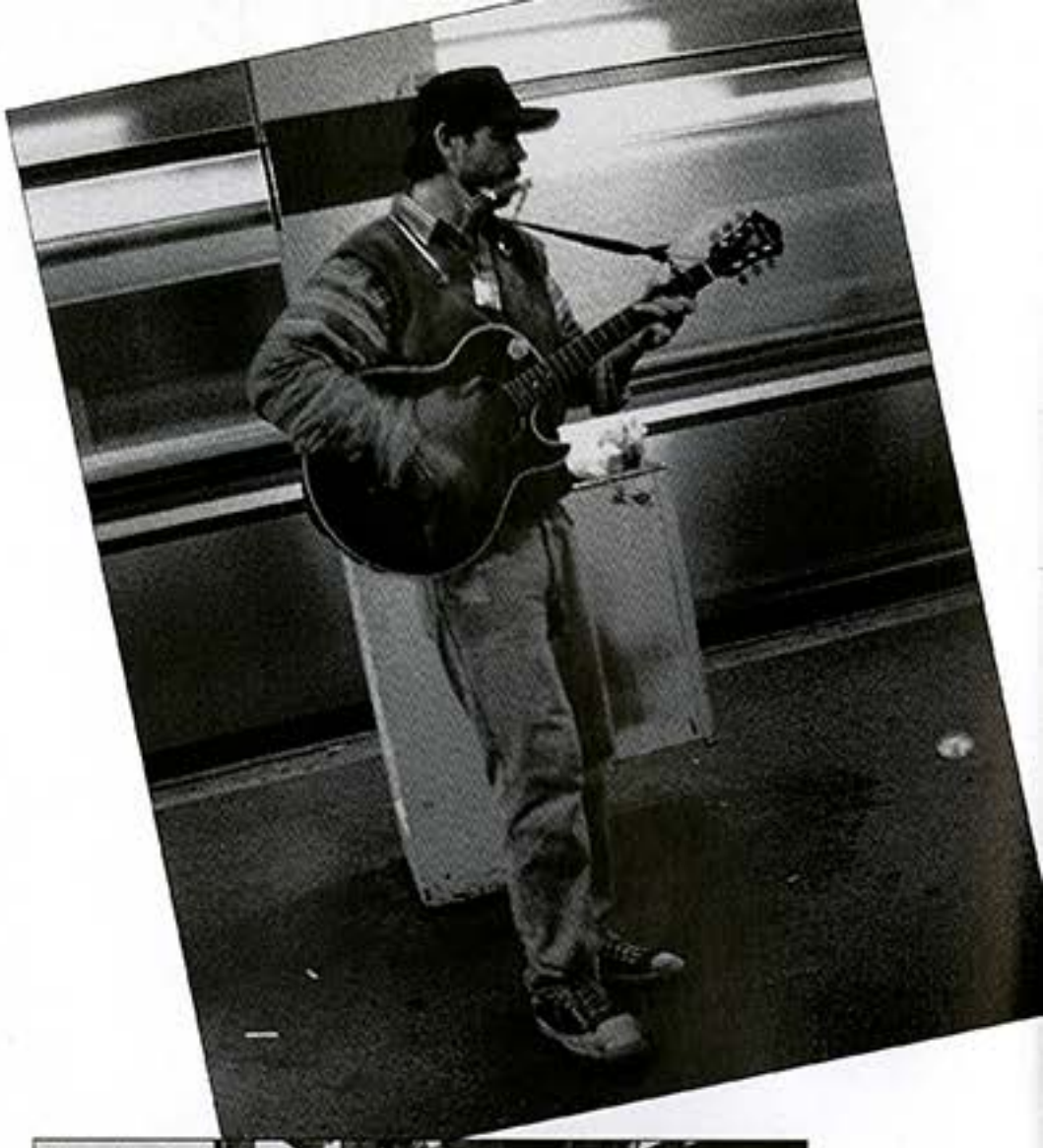
The strange. The funny. The unpredictable. These words encompass some of what life on the el is all about. You know it's true if you are one of the more than 1,800,000 riders who trek through snow, wallow through rain and endure heat to wait on the platforms of one of the world's best transportation systems—the Chicago Transit Authority Rapid Transit.

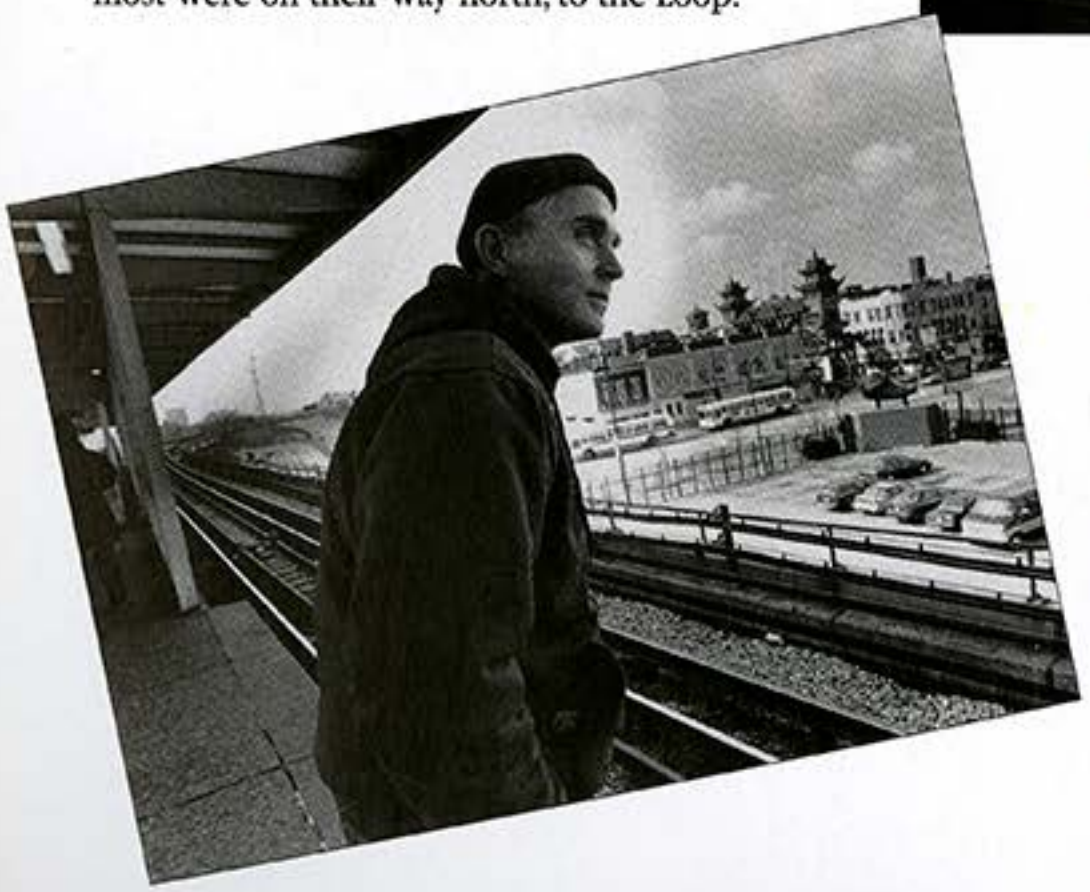
The elevated trains roar along the tracks and through downtown tunnels with the speed and fury of a determined lion. Sometimes, as you wait for them, if you tilt your head slightly over the platform, you might very well see a fluffy rodent scurrying along. At some stops, you also are aware of a stench of urine so pungent that you want to hold your breath until the silver centipede comes to whisk you away.

The el provides a roller coaster ride at certain twists and turns of the tracks as it speeds through the tunnels downtown, rocking, with its lights flashing. Sit in the first set of seats in the first car and you'll know what I mean. "All I want to see is where I'm going," a man told me. "I don't want to see anything else."

Every rider has good and bad experiences to relate. I've had quite a few, but the one that looms over all the others happened while I was a student at Bogan High School.

During that time I was a "Dan Ryan el Head" riding the el to 79th Street from Adams and Wabash every weekday morning. I always sat in a window seat in the last car. It was a tranquil journey because when I was on my way south—most were on their way north, to the Loop.





On this particular morning, the whole car was empty, except for one guy sitting a few seats in front of me on the opposite side. As the train rolled along the tracks, the doors opened and in walked some vagrant who decided to sit next to me. Remember, the whole car was empty except for two seats.

I was studying for a U.S. History quiz. I was really into it when something in my peripheral view grabbed my attention. A jerking motion. Swiftly. Back and forth.

When I looked down I was stunned. I got up and bumped the man as hard as I could and went to another seat. Flabbergasted does not even begin to describe my state of mind. But when I got to school and recounted my experience, I found that I had not been the only victim of the "look-at-me-jerking-off-jerk".

Who are these characters who ride the el? Who are these people who board the trains and

make us smirk, make us smile, make us nauseous, and make us shake our heads in despair?

Who is the man in the tattered clothes and bloodied, dirty gym shoes looking wild-eyed? Was he in a brawl? Who is the beefy man in the trench coat selling "M&M's for twenty-five cents?"

Archie Bunker summed it up in one word, labeling them all not perverts, but "preverts" on an *All in the Family* episode in which he rode the subway with daughter Gloria and son-in-law Mike—aka "Meathead".

The conductors seem unenthused with the activities surrounding them. Ever notice? They've undoubtedly developed a high tolerance level for bullshit, eccentricity and latent horrors. They sometimes sit and daydream between stops.

Their uniforms are navy blue with a red line spilling evenly down both sides. They wear gold badges with identification numbers on their breasts.

On one particular day, a Hispanic woman in her early 30s sat near the silver box she spoke into at each stop. Her accent was heavy. She put the key into the silver box, peeked out of the window, flipped a switch, and announced the stop.

"No smoking or littering. Radio playing is not permitted on the train," she said.

She also added, "Welcome aboard and welcome to the CTA." Haven't heard that in a long time.

Her words were almost incomprehensible, not so much because of her accent but because of the muffled sound system. It suffocated the words and released them as gibberish. I understood it was because I was only inches away.

Robert Belcaster, executive director of CTA, has said that "heading up the CTA is about as tough as the first World War." His rapid transit battalion includes 1,222 rapid transit cars dispersed over six routes with 143 stations.

Belcaster considers us not just passengers, but "stockholders". Now isn't that special?

Well, this stockholder rode the Howard-Dan Ryan trains and what follows are excerpts from my journal.

The last car on the Howard-Dan Ryan el was muggy. The kind of mugginess that doesn't allow easy breathing. Like on a 90 degree day when humidity is at 100 percent.

A dark man in his 20s demanded everyone's attention.

"I'm G.Q., the teacher," he announced with an accent.

He proceeded to rap about "Unity," arms flailing as he rocked from side to side. The flow of his rhythm was smooth, what the hip hop generation call "phunky" or "phresh."

Before G.Q. exited, he invited everyone to party with him that weekend at a Northside club.

A woman in a large purple coat screamed, "Is this Roosevelt Road?" as the el began to speed away from the stop. Her face was plastered with make-up and she resembled a sales clerk in the cosmetics department at Marshall Field's or Carson Pirie Scott. Somebody please tell her the natural look is in, I thought.

"Pull the red cherry ball," one fool yelled to the woman, referring to the emergency brake above the doors—which is strictly for use in case of emergency.

She hesitated and looked up.

"No!" Someone else yelled, "you'll stop the damn train."

She retreated back to her seat and exited at 22nd Cermak.

A frail, drunken man's voice rose in song as the train rushed through the underpass near Comiskey (35th) Park. His complexion matched his dull, drab clothes.

He retrieved four bottles of Mumm's champagne from a plastic bag, stood up and began to sing the words "Boom Shakalaka Laka," over and over again while stuffing the bottles into the pockets of his coat and pants. No one really cared or paid attention. Why should they? It seemed to be the norm of el behavior.

The first car of the northbound Howard-Dan Ryan was packed. Little faces were decorated with masks and paints in anticipation of the Halloween parties they were on their way to attend.

At 55th, a woman exited with an infant tied snugly to her abdomen and a little boy holding her hand.

The boy screamed "Wait!" His small foot was trapped in the space between the car and the platform. His mother shook his leg free. They disappeared down the platform.

A chubby woman with a crumpled Afro bent forward into her own purple-skirted lap. Eczema had declared war on her thick legs—or maybe was it just layers of dirt. Her arms were tucked into a powder blue Bugs Bunny sweatshirt. I never saw her face.

The train was racing toward 55th Street and noses squinched and eyes suddenly rolled to the fleshy woman who emerged from her seat with four dingy kids. A baby was smothered against her breast, a toddler hung onto her thighs, while the other two stood on either side of her.

Comb their heads; take a bath, I thought.

Silent prayers went out for the doors to open and relieve us of the funk. Prayers were answered. The doors parted and finally she was gone.

Vendors were vending and people were buying. You can buy just about everything traveling on the el. Seriously. Everything from underwear to dishcloths to telephone cords to I.D. wallets.

A short copper-toned man was selling cassette tapes, yelling rhythmically "three for five...three for five."

(Don't ever buy those tapes. They are poor, horribly dubbed tapes. It's a rip-off. Sincerely).

Seconds later another vendor entered selling phone cords, wallets and barrettes.

When I thought two were enough, vying for my dollars, there came another, swearing the set of dishcloths in his hands were the last.

"Three dollars," he told the passengers.

A man in a yellow hat, with a blue ribbon tied neatly around it, stopped one of the vendors for a purchase.

Michael Jackson was "in the house," or so he thought. It was a wet, soggy, chilly day. Every breath exhaled turned into white puffs of cloud.

A yellow/brownish man with a series of moles decorating his face boarded the train at 35th. He sported a beige hat and matching trench coat and had an umbrella in his hand. His skin peeked from beneath the holes in his lavender socks.

He was laughing uncontrollably for two stops straight. I thought it might be something he'd seen or heard, but the laughing continued into downtown Chicago.

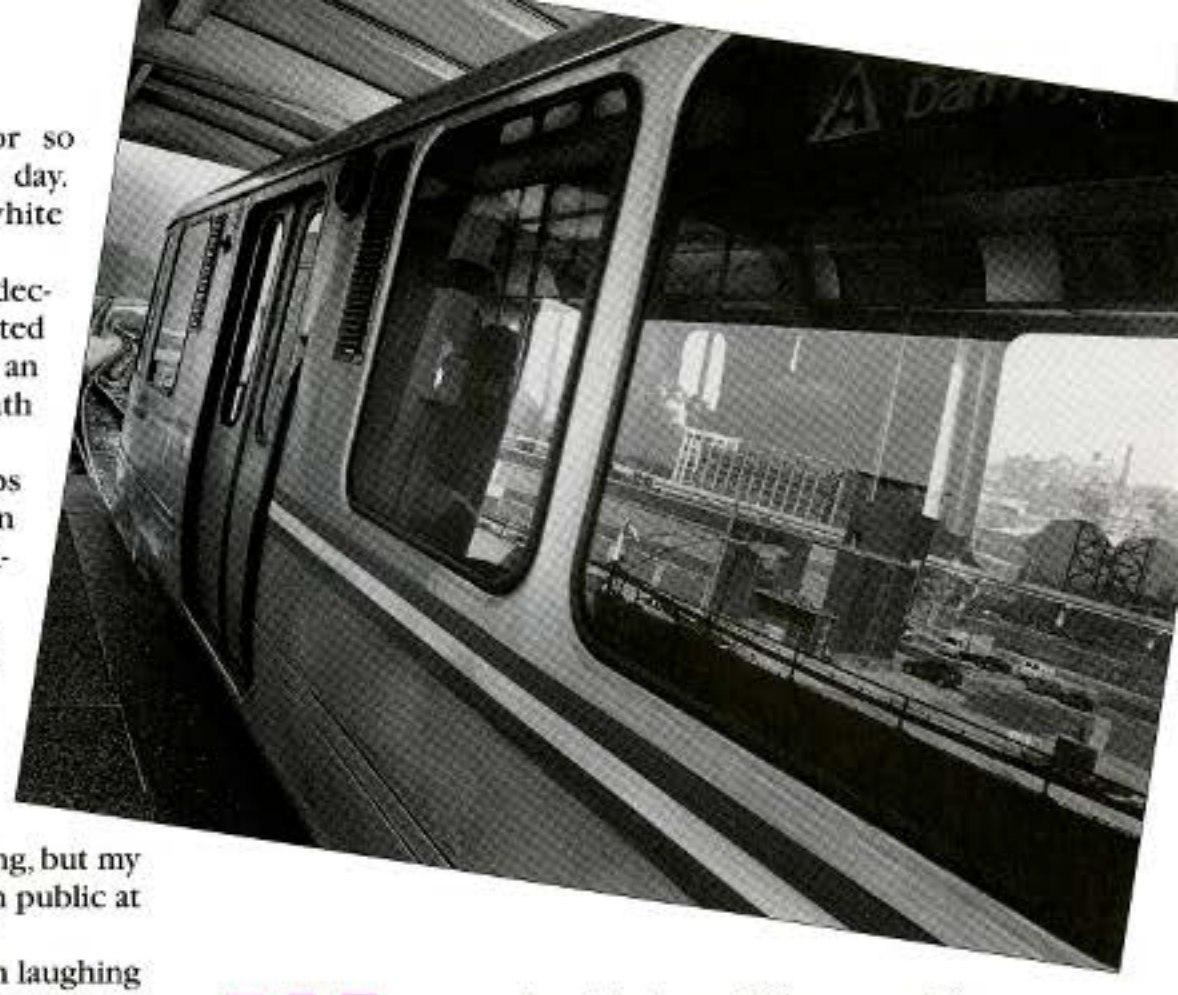
"I'll jump your ass!" he said. Who was he talking to? Nobody. Yet he talked. And he laughed. Did his childhood imaginary friend still exist within his mind?

Childlike, he played as if he was toting a gun. "Pow! Pow! Pow!"

Then the toothless smile. I wanted to die laughing, but my mother's words echoed in my mind: "Never laugh in public at people who seem to have problems. It's ignorant."

"You want some of this?" he asked to the women laughing so intensely at his performance they were nearly out of their seats. He stood up and took off the short trench coat and modeled, showcasing the fake gold chains hanging from his neck and the gaudy, thick rings on his fingers. He did Michael Jackson moves, rotating his pelvis toward the women.

I couldn't help wondering if these el cars are simply miniature asylums connected to each other.



Where was the ticket agent? She was missing. I really didn't mind keeping my $1.80, but I wasn't sure I could jump the turnstile. When I finally made it over, the bars clicked back, taking me backwards. It was a scene out of a comedy movie—trust me. I finally made it over.

A man named Luke vowed never again to ride Chicago el trains. He was at the point of no return. His wife Candace was in agreement.

"The el is for peasants," he said.

I laughed and repeated, "peasants."

Both Luke and Candace are Metra riders. "The Metra is reliable," Candace said, "and they got a train schedule," she added sarcastically.

The outlandish. The hilarious. The unforeseeable. All can be found in the el zone. Urban anthropology. □

designed by Olandrian Glosper

HAIL MARY!

A PROFILE OF DIRECTOR MARY ZIMMERMAN

photographs provided by the Goodman Theatre

by Elizabeth Ward

Ooooh, I was going to be so professional. I pulled my formal black wool coat from its hanger in the closet, checked myself out in the foyer's full-length mirror, grabbed my pad and pen and slid them neatly into the tan leather briefcase I hadn't used in months: the Eddie Bauer ruck sack—albeit brand new—was not an option. Today was not just any interview. Today was Mary Zimmerman, a true Chicago success story: a woman who has thoroughly made a name for herself in the ever-expanding Chicago theater circle, (as well as certain renown in New York) not by directing contemporary work or age-old classics, but by directing productions that have been called downright unconventional, unorthodox, or what I would call *risk-taking at its best*.

Now, I've interviewed important people in my writing career (journalist Molly Ivins, *Rush* author Kim Wozencraft and *Stop the Insanity's* Susan Powter, to name a few) but I just happened to be a Chicago playwright who was honored and excited about the prospect of interviewing someone who is, arguably, one of most respected women in Chicago theater today. Move over Susan—make room for Zimmerman.

We agreed to meet at Northwestern's Evanston campus where Zimmerman is a faculty member in the Department of Performance Studies. I wasn't really familiar with the relatively new buildings on the southeast side of the university so I arrived early and walked slowly, purposefully, to the building where I was told to go. Yep, I was ready to do business with my most reporter-ly intense attitude, when I rounded the corner toward the entrance and saw a woman wearing a patterned dress and opaque tights, sporting a backpack. She was getting off a mountain bike and locking it to a rack. The sight of her short-cropped dark hair framing a fair-skinned complexion—now ruddy from both the cold as well as the exercise, made me ease my pace because it was her—Mary, I thought—red cheeked and relaxed, strolling into the building, and I did not want to pass her by. I did follow her up the stairs though, falling 20 or so feet behind, stopping as she stopped—approached by students who asked her questions or just to say "hello." Almost everyone she came within two feet of acknowledged her with a smile. When she went down the hall to her office, I stopped at a reception desk to say I had an appointment with Ms. Zimmerman. The student sitting there was not surprised, "she's been

photo by Joann Carney

interviewed a lot lately," he said, "she's really amazing." I know, I thought. I know.

In a short time frame, Mary Zimmerman's credits and accomplishments linger with one success after another that would make any struggling producer/writer/director envious. She is a proud ensemble member of the Lookingglass Theatre Company, where she has adapted and directed Homer's *The Odyssey*, Nabokov's *Secret In the Wings*, and the highly popular production of *The Arabian Nights*, which was subsequently nominated for a Drama Desk Award at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City as well as three Jeff Award nominations for Best Production, Adaptation, and Direction. She has also directed *Laughter I*, *The Actor Retires*, and *Jack* for the Remains Theatre and *Hapgood*, for the Center Theatre. Along with her teaching engagement at Northwestern, she is also an affiliate artist at the Goodman Theatre—the first woman ever appointed in its 80-year history—directing Paula Vogle's *The Baltimore Waltz* in Goodman's Studio Space.

Her most recent production, and the most commercially successful "surprise" that really sent her headfirst into decisive acknowledgement was her adaptation of *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* for the Goodman Studio. *Notebooks* also enjoyed a run in New York's *Serious Fun Festival* at Lincoln Center. Zimmerman is also the director for the ongoing theater/radio series *Stories on Stage* and has directed several short, independent films. All this in about six years. Whew. Forget the briefcase and how I looked—I wanted to know this woman and how she ticked.

In her office, she nonchalantly propped one leg onto her chair and let the other dangle to the floor. She shook my hand directly, adding a terrific smile and squinting, happy eyes to her fair complexion. All of my undue pretention was lost as I thought about what was really on my mind: why adaptation, and why, why, why are the subjects she chooses to create so—at the risk of sounding odd—funky and outta this world?

It's relevant to note that Mary Zimmerman came to Northwestern, as a student, with a strong interest in literature, and entered with those pursuits in mind. Not surprisingly, the Nebraska daughter of two college professors, her mother in comparative literature and her father in physics, Zimmerman is an admitted "compulsive reader" who finds intense "pleasure in books." In fact, part of the reason she chose Northwestern was to study under Albert Appel, a scholar of Vladimir Nabokov. However, apparently something in Zimmerman was not being fulfilled, because shortly thereafter she switched to what was then called the Department of Interpretational Theater.

This theater department allowed her to mix all of her talents to create works that exemplified her true artistic self. Never deviating far from literature, Zimmerman, instead, embraces it with the invention, the imagination and the balls enough to bring difficult material competently and entertainingly to the stage.

Drawn to material that the "stage has a difficult time with," Zimmerman first produced her adaptation of da Vinci's 5000 page notebooks in 1989, as part of her undergraduate thesis work at Northwestern. With $800 and a virtually bare set, she made her professional debut, now reflected in three satisfying sold-out nights. She was drawn to the enormous manuscript (depicting "the great man's notions on flight, dreams, motion and anatomy...among a zillion other topics") like she is drawn to most material—because it had an "inherent theatricality," and was ultimately "challenging." By using a number of elements, she brought the text to life. This is not to say she substitutes film clips or slide images to re-create theater, but incorporates elements such as music, movement, poetry and dialogue to exemplify the often multifaceted information.

Mary Zimmerman directing a rehersal of the Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci for the Goodman

It's "midway between play-writing and doing someone else's play. It's shadows of the original text." Many times, as she did with her original *Notebooks*, then in later productions at the Goodman, she starts rehearsals with no script at all, and thus commends her actors for having the courage, and self-confidence to deal with that aspect of her process. Zimmerman, herself having acted, is not sure how she would react if she had to work with a director such as herself because, in her experience, she "would want to know [her] lines," going in. As a playwright, she knows that it's asking a lot of actors to have faith in one who sets a script down on day one, and asks the cast and crew to develop gestures and movements to illustrate whatever images they find in the original text; and as a director, she never asks of her performers what she would not or could not do herself. Actors, that Zimmerman has worked with, will tell of this short, muscular woman lifting a 200-plus man over her head while giving stage directions—or of giving a direction, doing a back-flip, and resuming directing—for these reasons, whenever possible, she works with familiar actors who know and respect her style.

During the summer of 1994, when she took the original cast members of *Notebooks* to a 610-seat house at New York City's Lincoln Center, she felt like she was literally taking her play "on a journey" and the outcome was hugely fulfilling. Although she was very surprised at the popular success of the play, she "always believed in it," from its first production, and it still remains, to this day, her "most gratifying" piece of work. When the play first went up in 1989, and attitudes about it ranged from excited to ambiguous to doubtful, Zimmerman had said to her

actors, "there is nothing you can do that would disappoint me," returning the faith and respect that the actors originally granted her.

As a director, she says that "ninety percent of directing is how you are with people. There is a certain amount of compassion you have to have with everyone you work with." On the other hand, Zimmerman also conceded to being somewhat "heartless" when she directs because, ultimately, she has the power to say "that is or is not going in." When all is said and done, she says that "the audience responds to the spirit" of the entire performance from the actors, to the music to the set design.

Her work also intertwines the "amusing" with levels of sadness. An angle that Zimmerman uses to push a point to its appropriate strength. "The amusing [parts of the performances] come from my personality." The sadder moments "gain weight by the heavy laughs...to move people in the end. It's very much like life. It's double-edged with humor and sadness." She finds it absolutely necessary to use her comedic writing ability to balance the magnitude of some of her darker subjects.

Because of the normal "discover your major, find your way" outlook of college life, Zimmerman didn't start directing until she was 26-years-old. Not only that, she "never thought she'd have a career in this" work at all. All of this, it seems, came as a surprise for the Lincoln, Nebraska, native; however, she always "wanted a place in theater." Although she has produced and acted in her own performance pieces at Northwestern, she told me, quite candidly, that she "could never bargain on [her] looks" to become a full-time actress.

However, coming from this attractive, funny and genuinely serious woman sitting across from me, swiveling her chair a bit with each pronounced inflection, I found that hard to believe. Yes, I thought, drifting in thought, show business might be reserved for Hollywood beauties, but you, believe it or not, are the real article. In addition to an obviously impressive resumé, you, Mary Zimmerman, have made history at one of the most famous theaters in the country: the Goodman.

When I mentioned that 80 years is a long time with no female representation at that institution, Zimmerman responded with a slight smile. She mentioned that the Goodman has certainly had women on their support staff, in different departments, like design and costuming, among others; however, the "artistic team" to that point, had seen nary a female. When she was notified of the news in the summer of 1992, she met with Michael Maggio, Goodman's Associate Artistic Director, and "tried to get him to admit that part of the reason she was offered the position was because she was a woman." Part of her inquiry stemmed from the fact that, apparently, an African-American was also named along with Zimmerman. Maggio confirmed her question in so many words. Zimmerman's point? Simply to find the truth and "get it out of the way." She clearly stated that she was "conscious of a lack" of women in the hierarchy of the theater world in general. Because she holds certain power and prestige, the Goodman is clearly one more opportunity for Zimmerman's voice to be heard. She remains unfazed by the fact that she is a woman, and is concerned more with her future projects.

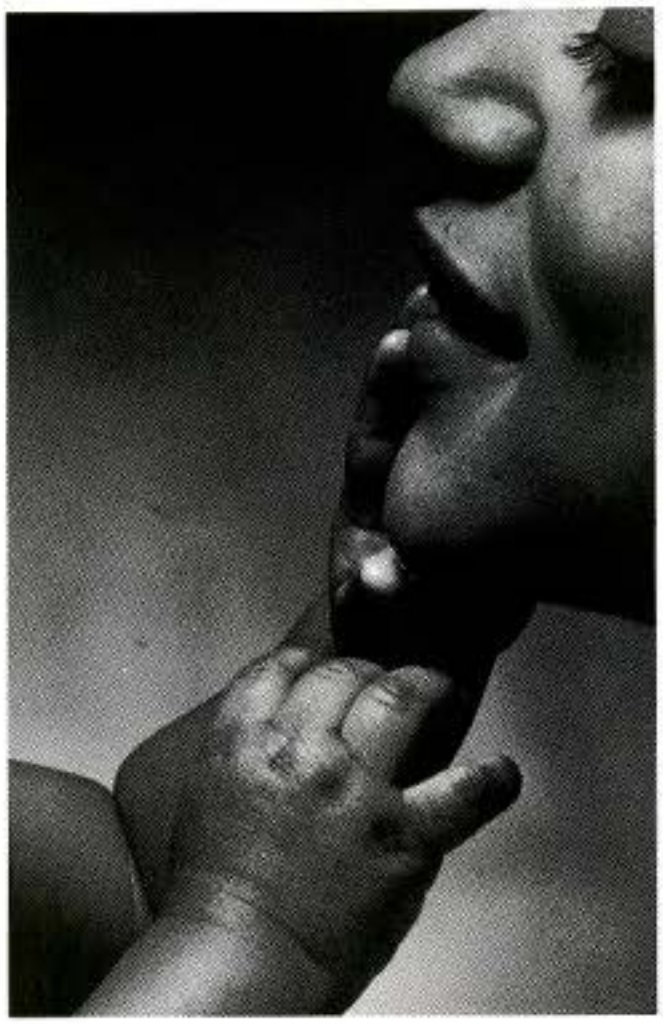
As any artist would, Zimmerman finds positive as well as negative aspects in the transition from being a freelance artist to her positions at the Lookingglass and the Goodman. "It's always nice to have a home," she stated, "so there is continuity. You don't feel so desperate," as far as finding a place to produce your work. "You're always guaranteed a slot, and the sense of urgency is undermined." She also finds it interesting that with the theater's regular season, she now works "a year in advance," so she knows what is expected of her and can work toward that particular goal. The downside is that she "can't act impulsively," as many independent artists would like to. It all seems to make sense coming from a woman who adamantly told me, at the beginning of the interview, to "Produce yourself! Don't wait for anyone to hire you."

However, Zimmerman seems to be adapting very well to her structured environment. Robert Falls, Goodman's Artistic Director, has been quoted as saying nothing but bright and significantly positive things about Zimmerman and her work. That "she has an amazing ability to meld text, movement and imagery" and he "is delighted to continue working with her."

Yet, even though Zimmerman appears to be rolling along at a flourishing pace, there is a composed, almost sedate feeling surrounding her that I found intriguing. "I always think [whichever project is being worked on] will be the last thing I do," she said calmly. She felt she could not top *The Arabian Nights*, then came *Notebooks* and now, she feels the same way about the New York success of her da Vinci piece. She seems to surprise herself. In one instance she found herself, a few hours before opening night at Lincoln Center, having a panic attack. Not because of the show, but because she couldn't figure out whether she should be nervous or not. Zimmerman had been so collected until that point that she couldn't decide which way to react. Her natural instinct, it seems, is to somewhat downplay the events of her work so as to not become disappointed if things don't work out. In this "anything goes" business, she says this method helps her in most cases; however, at times it "mutes" her enjoyment of a truly exciting occasion. She doesn't read her reviews because "if I believe the good ones, I have to believe the bad ones." She is, however, aware of the "public word of the show, because it's important to see what it does for the cast," and said, frankly, that the two people she listens to with the most interest are her boyfriend, actor Bruce Norris, and fellow director/adaptor and Northwestern faculty member Frank Galati. Because many Chicago theater and art critics use such "cutting language," she would rather not have their words running through her head.

In keeping with her mythic, ancient, and epic themes, Zimmerman's latest project was *Journey to the West*, a sixteenth century Chinese novel that she described as an "deeply spiritual adventure—involving magic, transformation and flying." Although long in its original form, "outsized" she said, Zimmerman looked forward to finding the structure that would end up as her first Goodman mainstage production. When we talked on that winter afternoon, she said she had some time before she really needed to work intently on it. Perhaps, if she was still that freelance artist, she would have cut our interview short, in a rush to complete something she wasn't sure would ever see the stage. At least she doesn't have that type of pressure now, only the challenge to *not* make this the "last thing she does." Thankfully, I think, Mary Zimmerman has found her home. □

THE ABILITY TO STOP
CHILD ABUSE
IS FINALLY WITHIN OUR REACH.



Until now, there was little you could do to actually stop child abuse. But now there's an innovative new program that can actually help stop abuse before it starts. A program that helps new parents deal with the stresses that can lead to abuse. It's already producing unprecedented results. But only with your help can we reach the children being born where you live. Call 1-800-CHILDREN to learn how to help.

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National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse

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Four IN FASHION

Chicago designers who hold their own

by Shannon M. Sauter

Where can you find sophisticated styles at a good price? For conservative designs in luxurious fabrics, you don't need to go far. Chicago is home to fashion designers who would rather share their designs with the rest of the United States from a more comfortable environment. Many aspiring designers think the only way to become successful is to work out of the Big Apple; whereas, the Windy City provides up-and-coming and established designers a place where they can supply the demand without all the major competition. It's easier to start out small and gradually become noticed. Their chances increase from being a needle in a haystack to being a needle in a dress form.

In talking with women's fashion designers: Richard Dayhoff, Peggy Martin, Jane Hamill, and Tiffani Kim, they all agreed that focusing their energy on the Chicago area, allows them to show what they can do best in an unhyped fashion. Chicago designers agree that specialty stores and boutiques reach a smaller market, but tend to stay more loyal than department stores. But while that may be true, Marshall Field's has been very loyal to Dayhoff's designer sportswear line for nine years.

Dayhoff's classic, sleek styling is heavily inspired by menswear. He always uses deep colors—midnight blue, black and charcoal. The simple designs are to be paired with accessories that create an individual look. It's like a man sporting a tie, shirt and handkerchief with his suit—he wouldn't look complete without them. Dayhoff's designs can be matched with brighter colors which may be more trendy, but the ensemble will still be around even after neons are "out" again.

Descending from the glitzy spotlight of New York, designer Peggy Martin creates a glamorous spotlight of her own, not far from her native town of Independence, Ohio. Martin must have developed the concept of easy sportswear, for her fabric choices, whether it be rayon blend or 100 percent wool, are ideal for the woman on the go. Women who are slim or who have figure flaws can find the right outfit for them from Martin's versatile styles, accented with matching trims and buttons. Even despite her lack of accessibility to certain fashion expositions, she doesn't regret staying in the midwest.

To compensate for the shortage of shows, up-and-coming designer Jane Hamill has to travel to New York to choose fabrics from showrooms. Hamill, a sportswear designer, uses her contemporary flare to provide many professional young women with reasonably priced coordinates that add a fresh new look to their wardrobe.

Chicago also provides a good base for talented immigrants like Tiffani Kim, an eveningwear and sportswear designer, who moved to Rockford, Illinois, from her native country of South Korea. Her international studies and practical experience have certainly influenced her designs. Kim creates "wearable fashion" with her European styling that's not avant-garde and her use of silk fabrics helps to bring out the flowing Oriental lines.

Richard Dayhoff

FROM: Rockford, Illinois

LINE: Designer sportswear

EDUCATION: Chicago's International Academy of Merchandising and Design. Also attended Illinois State University for marketing and Rock Valley College.

FIRST DESIGN MEMORY: "I had applied to the Academy to study merchandising, but it was full, so I registered for fashion design thinking that I would transfer over later. It wasn't until I won the Outstanding Freshman Design award that I knew that I would go into design."

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "The simplicity makes it modern, classic styling makes it timeless, and the lines are clean. My clothes don't date themselves. Fabrication is most important—I design last. Clothing doesn't wear the person—they add accessories to it. Clothing is a backdrop for one's own personality, a canvas for what one puts on. There's a menswear influence in our subtle patterns, the feminine side is the fluidity of the fabric and shape of the garment."

WHERE TO BUY: Marshall Field's, Carson Pirie Scott, Lathem Limited, Teifer [Seattle, Washington], and 40 specialty shops and boutiques across the country and Canada.

INFLUENCES: "I travel a lot. I act as a sponge when I sit in a cafe and look to see what women wear. I meet people at my personal appearances and find out what they like to wear."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The Chicago Apparel Industry Board's Designer of Tomorrow award, among others.

LATEST PROJECT: "My non-gender specific fragrance, *Dayhoff*. It's classic and sophisticated, just like my designs."

Peggy Martin

FROM: Idependence, Ohio

LINE: Easy sportswear

EDUCATION: Parsons School of Design, New York City.

FIRST DESIGN MEMORY: "When I was five, I made clothes for my dolls."

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "I use jersey knit fabric which is comfortable, easy to wear and pack. Pants have elastic waistbands and can be dressed up or down. My designs are simple, clean, flattering and flexible with any type of figure."

HAS WORKED FOR: Thierry Mugler, a Parisian designer.

WHERE TO BUY: 200 outlets, at better specialty shops and designer boutiques, and Marshall Field's.

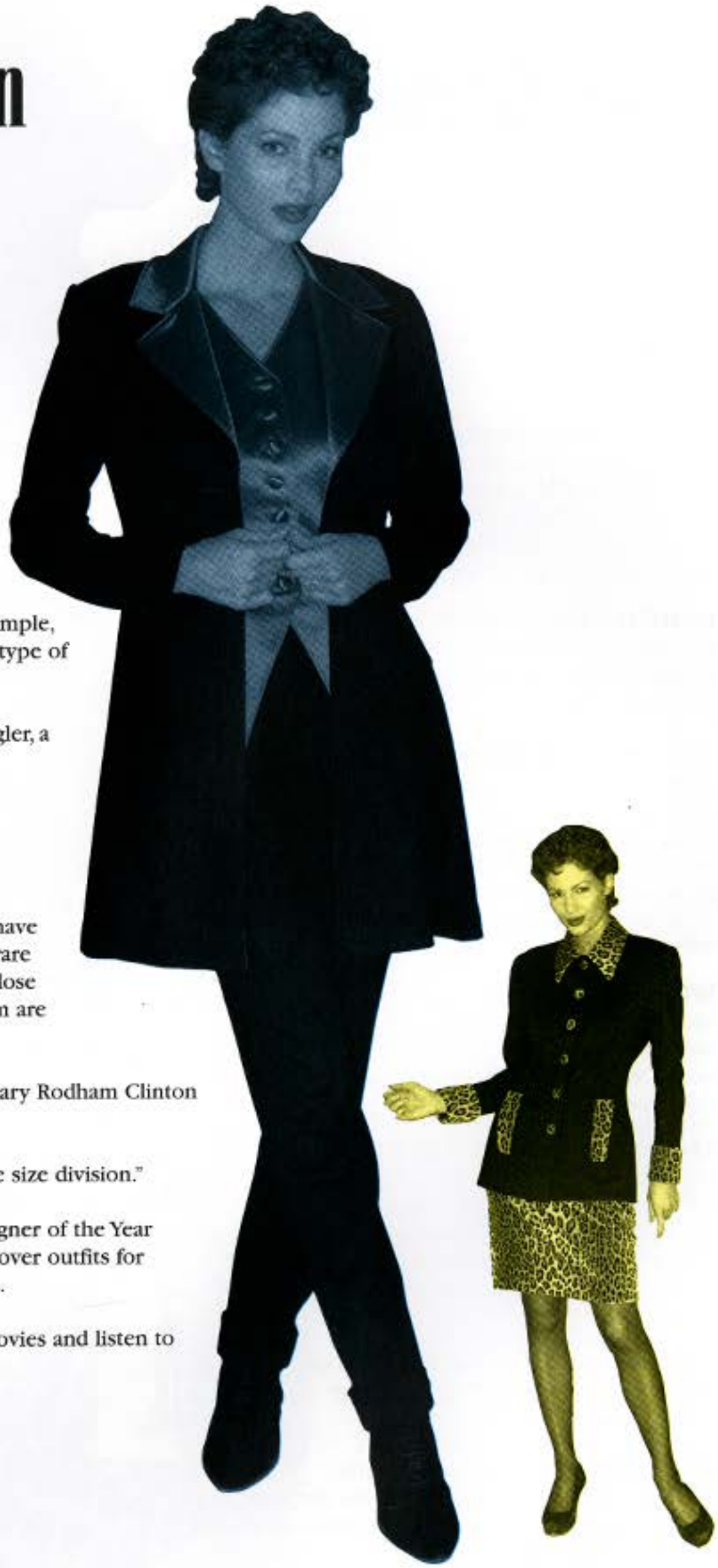
CHICAGO VS. NEW YORK: "I have my own factory in Chicago, which is rare in New York. However, here, I'm not close to the marketplace, and fabric and trim are unsolicited."

FAMOUS CLIENTS: First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and Kirstie Alley

FUTURE PLANS: "To design a large size division."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 1992 Designer of the Year award, designed on stage and album cover outfits for Styx for almost five years in the 1980s.

IN SPARE TIME: "Travel, watch movies and listen to Latin music."



Jane Hamill

FROM: Wilmette, Illinois, then moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin after the third grade.

LINE: contemporary sportswear.

EDUCATION: Fashion Institute of Technology [F.I.T], New York City; studied six months at Esmod School of Design in Paris.

FIRST DESIGN MEMORY: "In junior high, I made shorts for myself and eventually for the entire soccer team. At a health club, some women admired the jumper I had on and asked me where I bought it. When I told them I made it, they quickly asked if I could make them each one. I took their sizes and delivered the jumpers a week later."

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "I design clothes that I want to wear. They must be comfortable, functional and not boring. They [must be easy to care for and] can be worn more than once."

HAS WORKED FOR: "I interned, part-time, at Andy Johns Fashions, a Manhattan outerwear designer. Afterward, I worked full-time, moving up to Chief Designer in the International Division and was transfered to Chicago. When the division relocated back to New York, I decided to stay and open my own boutique. All my hard work paid off on October 30, 1992, when it opened."

WHERE TO BUY: "At my boutique on North Lincoln Avenue and at more than fifty stores across country including Marshall Field's, Carson Pirie Scott, Oasis in SoHo [New York City] and Saks Jandel, a Washington D.C. specialty store."

CHICAGO VS. NEW YORK: "It's less expensive and I'm comfortable here. New York is much more difficult city because you need security guards. Most of the people who shop here are down-to-earth. They're not like wild, crazy, cheating New Yorkers."

FUTURE PLANS: "I want to open a second store in Chicago and build a bigger base of accounts."

IN SPARE TIME: "Mountain biking, working out, and reading books by my mother-in-law, Judith Viorst, who wrote *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad, No Good Day*."

Tiffani Kim

FROM: South Korea and then Rockford, Illinois

COMPANY: Tiff and Griff Designs with partner/husband Bradley Griffith

LINE: Eveningwear and sportsrwear

EDUCATION: Chicago's School of the Art Institute, Brighton Polytech in England and freelanced in Italy.

FIRST DESIGN MEMORY: "Making Barbie clothes. I've wanted to be a fashion designer ever since I was six."

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "To make women look pretty and feminine."

HAS WORKED FOR: "Guy Laroche. I had a leather collection licensed under my name. And while still in school, I worked for Jean Charles de Casatelbajac."

WHERE TO BUY: At some Marshall Field's, Bergdorf Goodman, Nordstrom, Jacobsen's [Jackson, Michigan and Winter Park, Florida], Isaacson's [Alanta, Georgia], Lillie Ruben and specialty boutiques.

CHICAGO VS. NEW YORK: Chicago has been a good base to have a business. Being out of the limelight of New York has allowed me to focus on the business and have it grow slowly. In New York, I put on my mean face; otherwise, they'll walk all over you. It's tough."

INFLUENCES: "My father, a military major, was strict; whereas, my mother, an entertainer in South Korea, was always around creative people. They balanced each other out."

INSPIRATIONS: Karl Lagerfeld, Yves Saint Laurent, Claude Montana and Geoffrey Beene.

LATEST PROJECT: Creating a center featuring an upscale hair salon, a Holistic medical center, a day spa, yoga sessions and other amenities [located at 310 W. Superior].

IN SPARE TIME: "On weekends, I enjoy gardening, sketching and designing in my little house in Michigan."

designed by Diane Bell

THE OTHER REALITY

BY DREW FERGUSON

would you like to meet a flying pterodactyl?

"So this is virtual reality," I say to myself.

I'm standing on the center of a circular pedestal about a foot-and-a-half off the ground. A Virtual World employee tells me that I should lower the ring now. The ring is a giant fluorescent orange, toilet seat-shaped circle that encompasses the whole of the pedestal. It's there, I figure, to keep me from falling off the pedestal and breaking my neck. I lower the waist-level ring and hear it click as it locks into place.

"Put on your belts," she shouts, and I can't help thinking how ridiculous I must look to anyone watching. Luckily, it's a slow day at Virtual World at North Pier and no one is watching. It's just me, three other participants in *Virtuality*, "the ultimate high-tech universe," and the employees. Still, if someone was to walk by...

Fortunately, I don't have too much time to think about that. We're supposed to be putting on our belts and I can't get mine on. The thing is about as thick as a seat belt, but that's not the problem. The problem for me is the big black box attached to the back of it. The box, I assume, houses all the electronic equipment needed to "play tag at the speed of light" or whatever the instructional video said we would be doing, but I can't get it on. I'm a klutz in reality and already it seems that I'll be even more of a klutz in virtual reality.

Luckily, the employee comes over and helps me put on the belt. The belt feels weird around my waist—like a fanny pack put on backwards. Not only does the black box have wires running out of it, but there's a metal cable attached to it that is hooked to the back of the pedestal. Another thing to keep you from falling off. It may not be the easiest thing to get into, but at least it's safe.

Having guessed that, out of the four *Virtuality* participants, I'm the one who's going to be trouble, the Virtual World woman decides to stick around and help me into my helmet. Smart move on her part, because I probably would have broken it trying to get it on. Don't get the wrong idea, if you have average motor skills, none of this would be difficult, but mine are well below the norm. I was the kid who never learned to tie my shoes and was in danger of failing kindergarten gym because I couldn't skip.

When the helmet's on, it covers the upper half of my head completely. The display screen's not on yet, so I can't see anything in front of me. My peripheral vision is totally obscured by the sides of the helmet (like blinders on a horse), and the built-in headphones shut out most of the sound. I'm nervous and beginning to sweat.

I can faintly hear the woman telling me to get my "gun," which is hanging from its holster on my belt, but I can't find it. I can't see a thing and I start slapping my sides trying to feel for it.

"Where is it? Where is it?" I panic.

She grabs my hand, pulls the "gun" from the holster, and places it in my hand. The "gun," I remember from the instructional video, is much more than a gun. It also controls your movement in the three-dimensional virtual world. This high-tech gadget looks surprisingly low-tech. In fact, it looks a lot like the spray nozzle of a kitchen faucet without the barrel. The gun has a trigger button where you'd expect it to be, and at the top of that, there's another button. This top button controls your movement. When you depress it, it moves you forward and when you let it up, you stop moving. This is probably the simplest aspect of virtual reality so far, but I guess, it's one of the small technical nightmares from the computer end. The software has to be able to account for when each and every one of the five participants are moving, which direction they're moving in, what they can see in front of them, who can see them, and a laundry list of other things too complex for me to understand.

A CARTOON WORLD YOU CAN GET INTO

The display screen in front of my eyes flicks on and I'm looking across a checkerboard floor filled with three-dimensional cones and staircases. A voice from the earphones welcomes me to the world of *Virtuality* and then in the tone of a Saturday morning cartoon villain bellows, "Prepare to die!" Which, I suppose, is meant to

intimidate you—even more than getting into the equipment. I have been transported into the world of *virtual reality*.

But just how real is virtual reality? Well, I had been under the impression that virtual reality was a pretty good simulation of reality—and why shouldn't it be? After all, TV sitcoms portray virtual reality that way. As far as the graphics go, virtual reality is maybe a step or two above the graphic of PacMan on the old Atari machines (and this isn't too much of an exaggeration). The more exact terminology is that the graphics are *filled polygons*. If that's as meaningless to you as it was to me, imagine one of those wooden models of men and women that art students use to understand the motions of the human form and then you're beginning to get the idea of what the graphics are like. Still not clear? Remember that Dire Straits video with the computer animation of a man singing "I want my M T V"? That's what the graphics in the display look like. Needless to say, there's room for improvement, and improve it will. After all, virtual reality has only exploded in the last 10 years and was only created in 1965 by Ivan Sutherland.

I WAS THE KID WHO NEVER LEARNED TO TIE MY SHOES AND WAS IN DANGER OF FAILING KINDERGARTEN GYM BECAUSE I COULDN'T SKIP

The sound quality is okay, but not great. The voice that greets you at the beginning of each game is slow and still sounds like a computer talking—at times, it's also confusing. When the pterodactyls attack (more on them later) the voice announces, "Birdie is coming" but it sounds much more like "Birdie is hungry."

Even though the graphics and the sound could use improvement, it was still believable. Not believable in the sense that I thought, "Gee, these cheesy graphics almost look real," but believable in the sense that I forgot that I was interacting with the computer. While I was playing *Virtuality*, I forgot that I was playing *Virtuality*. It sounds very weird, but that's the way I felt. Virtual reality is like dreaming. Dreams aren't real. We know they aren't, but while we're having them, for the most part, we aren't aware that they're dreams. They're extremely intense and all encompassing and somehow, they manage to trick our mind into making us believe that they are real. The same thing can be said for virtual reality. *Virtuality*, was real enough to make me sweat, to make my heart pound against my rib cage and, at times, even to make me feel sea-sick.

By thinking that virtual reality had to be an accurate representation of reality, I was mistaken. *The Virtual Reality Primer* by L. Casey Larijani, points out that virtual reality can be defined as "a computer-synthesized, three-dimensional environment in which a plurality of human participants, appropriately interfaced, may engage and manipulate simulated physical elements in the environment and in some forms, may engage and interact with representations of other humans, past, present, or fictional, or with invented creatures;" or "an interactive computer system so fast and intuitive that the computer disappears from the mind of the user, leaving the computer-generated environment as the reality;" or "a cartoon world you can get into."

So, what do you do in this virtual world? Well, in *Virtuality*, you compete against the other four participants. All of you are armed with guns and are walking through a three-level maze complete with staircases and objects that you can hide behind. Basically, you just try to kill and not be killed. To fire your gun, you have to stretch out your arm and when you do this, a computer-generated version of your arm appears on the screen, aim at your opponent and fire. If you hit him, he actually blows up and you can see parts of his body fly across the screen. Moms and Dads, don't worry. As violent as it might sound, it's definitely not gory. These exploding bodies don't look like exploding bodies. They look more like shattering polygons. The Mortal Combat crow would definitely be unimpressed by the effects—there's no blood and guts.

If your shot misses, you watch as your missile flies off and you start praying that your opponent hasn't fired back at you. If he has, the only thing you can do is duck or try to run away. Guess how you duck. By ducking, the sensors in your helmet will let you do this without having to press any buttons. Trying to dodge the bullet is a bit more difficult. You actually have to turn your head in the direction you want to

run and then depress the top button to move. If you're extremely lucky, some other player might run into the line of fire and actually take the bullet instead of you. Believe it or not, this actually happened to me in one of the games I played. Poor guy got killed, but he allowed me the chance to get off another shot at the guy who had shot him and that time, it was a direct hit.

Unfortunately, the other participants aren't the only thing you have to worry about in *Virtuality*—there's also the pterodactyls. These big, green, pesky prehistoric critters swoop across the screen and if they come too close to you, you hear a warning ("Birdie is coming"). You have to look around to find them before they find you, because if you don't kill them, they'll grab you and fly you hundreds of feet above the playing field and then casually let you go, letting you drop to a certain death. Being grabbed by one of them is realistic because you get the sensation of being lifted off the ground, but falling isn't. When you fall, you don't get the sensation that you're falling like you would in a dream. It's more like watching somebody else fall.

Overall, *Virtuality* was well worth the money. I paid four bucks for four minutes of game time and they were among the most intense four minutes of my life. The odd thing about virtual reality was that it created an unreal world for four minutes which, afterwards, when you leave it and enter reality, is the only thing that you can think about. It's definitely addictive and far more entertaining than television or some recent movies.

Luckily, in the times I played, I was up against other new players. From what I was told by the employees at Virtual World, playing with other participants who are on the same level adds to the overall enjoyment of the game. At first I didn't exactly understand what they meant, until I played against one of the employees and, needless to say, I was beaten, and quite quickly too.

After getting involved with these virtual reality games and having a lot of fun with them, I began to think about all the technical mechanics that went into how they worked. I am no computer genius, so all this stuff was way over my head, but I did learn that VR, as it's called by the experts, is being used for a lot more than just entertainment.

Certain aspects of industry have been quick to jump into the VR world. The automotive industry has used virtual reality to give the cars that they design virtual test drives. The auto executives climb into chambers, like in the *Battletech* virtual reality games, and actually "drive" these new cars before they're ever built. By doing this, the auto industry is able to save a lot of time and money by making adjustments on a car before it ever goes into production.

The same thing is also happening in the world of architecture. Whole buildings are being designed and built in virtual worlds. Architects are now able to walk through their buildings, knock down or build different structures with voice commands and have any changes transfer onto a blueprint of the building.

WHEN YOU LEAVE VIRTUAL REALITY AND ENTER REALITY, THE UNREAL IS THE ONLY THING THAT YOU CAN THINK ABOUT

The world of education is also ripe for virtual reality. In the next decade or so, school children in history classes will be able to participate in famous battles, be present at the signing of *The Declaration of Independence* and/or explore the insides of the great pyramids. Literature classes will become far more interactive, as students become able to step inside and interact with the characters in the masterpieces of literature.

Virtual reality is already being used in medicine to help train surgeons in very detailed and difficult surgeries, just as it was used to train and prepare the shuttle astronauts for the repairs that they performed on the Hubble space telescope.

Virtual reality is also being used to perform dangerous laboratory experiments and wind tunnel tests, to explore the geography of the universe, to evaluate the military's weapons systems, in genetic and molecular modeling and even in virtual erotica.

To repeat the cliche, the applications for virtual reality are endless, and as computers get faster and faster and their graphics get better and better, virtual reality will become more important, both for its academic and entertainment values. Who knows, maybe someday I'll have my own VR system in my house, then I won't have to go down to North Pier to get attacked by flying pterodactyls. □

designed by Georgine Pardo

EAGLE

The virtues of their

FEATHERS

cultures sustain Indians who

AND DREAM

have settled in Chicago

CATCHERS

by Joanne Buckley

photographs provided by the Okee-Chee Wild Horse Gallery

In a politically correct world there are no Indians. We hear about American Indians or Native-Americans, and we know that there are Indian reservations, somewhere. But very few of us know Indians still exist, and even fewer know that Indians prefer to be referred to by the name of their nation, or simply just as an "Indian." One Native-American told me outright that it was OK to call him an Indian. In fact, he said it's what he prefers.

Indians have been under an assault of assimilation by the United States government since the 1950s. A policy of intimidation outlawed Indian ceremonies, even on the reservations, and brought Indians from the reservations to the cities.

Chicago was one of these cities. Indians came by bus after their applications for relocation were accepted. Many nations are now represented in the city, from the Dakotas to the Southwest and even to Canada. (When Indians refer to their nations, they are generally talking about a geographical area, and I was told that "tribe" is a white person's word and that Indian's belong to nations). Usually the Bureau of Indian Affairs provided lodging for the first few nights until permanent housing and employment were found. The area of the Uptown neighborhood was, at that time, undergoing a decline in economic stability; it lured the Indians with the availability of cheap housing, and so became the center of the Indian community in Chicago.

The overwhelming struggle of urban life did succeed, however, in causing the Indians to forget that their heritage provided built-in coping skills, making them even more dependent on a society that did not understand them.

Determining whether relocation was a success or a failure requires broad generalization, and then, it depends on point of view. There are those who believe that the government devised the plan of relocation in an effort to terminate the Indian through assimilation. Anna Valdez, a research librarian at Native American Education Services (N.A.E.S.) on west Peterson, is one such person.

"It was the government's way of getting out of it's treaty obligations," she said. "Reservations are supported by the government, which to some, represented a kind of welfare system."

The irony is that urban life embodied such culture shock that many Indians turned around a few months later and went right home. Some took advantage of the relocation program several times, going to a new city each time, but staying only a few months before returning. The employment situation was probably the single most significant factor that caused the Indians to abandon the city. The jobs Indians worked were often seasonal or paid minimum wage at best, which did nothing to improve the standard of living to which they had been accustomed on the reservation. In truth, it became worse. Without the services the reservation provided, like health care, the Indian had little chance at success. The overwhelming struggle of urban life did succeed, however, in causing the Indians to forget that their heritage provided built-in coping skills, making them even more dependent on a society that did not understand them.

I met Debra Zekleman, a member of the Chippewa nation, in the Anawim Center on north Broadway; she was sitting at her desk, hunched over a typewriter and puffing on a Parliament cigarette. Debra was a petite woman with shiny black hair, which she wore in a ponytail with a skinny braid that framed the left side of her face. She led me from the reception area to a medium-sized meeting room that was adorned with wall hangings and bulletin boards. Folding chairs leaned against a wall where shelves were jammed with boxes of miscellaneous items.

Debra told me that the name, Anawim, is derived from the Hebrew word that means "dispossessed." For many Indians, the adjective is fitting. The center, which is funded by the Catholic Church, is used for religious education classes as well as for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Within the Indian community, the effects of alcohol abuse are widespread and well-publicized. Debra herself recently celebrated a two-year anniversary of sobriety, which was acknowledged with the award of an eagle's feather. "Eagle's feathers are very sacred and are only given in honor of achievements," she said.

Just then, a short woman wearing a fake fur coat, sweat pants, boots and a knit cap entered the center. She asked Debra about using the phone, in loud, slurred speech. Debra clearly was embarrassed and got up quickly after whispering that the woman was inebriated. It took Debra nearly five minutes to return, and when she sat down she sighed and began twisting her narrow braid. "Alcohol is very devastating to our community and that is why we are trying so hard to warn our children before it's too late. We face the same problems raising our kids as does everyone else, and it's necessary for there to be sober role models for them," she said.

Debra said that she uses the Serenity Prayer as guidance in a white-dominated society. And she smudges everyday. Smudging is a way to bless oneself and to release negative energy. She led me to a makeshift grotto on the window sill, where there was a clay bowl with ashes in it. She put a handful of the sacred elements—sage, cedar, sweetgrass and tobacco—into the bowl, and as she lit the match she instructed me not to inhale the smoke.

When the mixture caught fire, she snuffed it out with a round stone, then cupped her hands as she scooped the smoke and bathed in it. She said the ritual cleanses her soul and gives her the ability to call upon her inner strength to cope with life. I was fascinated by her demonstration and it must have showed because she asked me if I wanted to be smudged. I agreed and was told to close my eyes and hold my arms straight out to the side. I thought

briefly of those test-of-faith exercises on televangelist shows and then surrendered myself to her soothing words. Again, with her hands cupped she dipped into the smoke, only this time, she bathed me. I wanted to believe that I would feel something, but was surprised when I really did. A strange feeling of calm washed over me, and I felt as though a bond had been formed between us.

My visit with Debra was to be the first of several that touched me in a way that is hard to explain. She wanted to show me what Indian spirituality is so that outsiders will accept the differences in culture and understand that there are benefits in such diversity.

"It's not easy being a so-called Indian," said James Yellowbank, of the Ho Chunk nation and coordinator of the Indian Treaty Rights Committee, also located in the Anawim Center. "We have to be able to brush things aside, to stretch the membrane they have enclosed us in. No one has to teach us to be Indian, we just have to be reminded. It's a reverse exodus."

James sat back in his chair with his weight forcing the chair to recline and stared at me. His face was heavily pock-marked and his ponytail was loose with wisps that framed his face. He hooked the heel of his shoe over the wheel of the chair and rocked gently while twisting a pencil between his fingers like a baton. The dark-paneled room was lit only by the blinking blue light from his computer monitor and the sunlight that filtered through the glass of the fish tank on the window sill. James pointed to the chair across from him and didn't really invite me to sit down, but told me that I could.

I thought briefly of those test-of-faith exercises on televangelist shows and then surrendered myself to her soothing words. A strange feeling of calm washed over me, and I felt as though a bond had been formed between us.

James pointed out his window at a pair of black helicopters that hovered over the high-rises of the low-income housing project—the Robert Taylor homes. He called them "ghetto busters" in what he termed the government's plan of scheduled elimination. "Just like Waco, Texas," he said. He turned his attention back to me and stared at me for another minute before he spoke again.

"Truth is defined by treaties, but treaties are a generic term. Treaties give us our legal identity and define the land that we call home. The truth is that treaties were not developed by those who were concerned about the survival of our people. It's also true that we are not even considered a minority. Really. Look at the constitution. We are called a political entity." He took a deep breath and shook his head. "It's a lifeboat theory, really. We have nine people but the lifeboat only holds five. Who do you throw out? How do you make all nine survive? This defines what you can be and tells you how to get there," he said.

James is a poet and a musician as well as a political activist. He uses his music to promote awareness of the issues facing modern Indians. His tape is called *Celebration of Hope*, his philosophy of life. An Indian's biggest enemy is hatred, he said, not white people. He prays that his people can accept the white person as a brother so that together, basic humanity can be restored. "Hopefully, it won't take longer than we have. Indians don't have a plight and we're not victims," he said. "We were not conquered, but rather overwhelmed by the United States government. We're just on a journey." Indeed, the Indians are on a journey that has taken them from their ancestral lands to the urban jungles.

Clovia Cossen, a Lakota (Sioux) Indian, came to Chicago more than 30 years ago with her family under the relocation program and directs the G.E.D. program at N.A.E.S. She looked like the ideal Indian woman to me with her long, thick, shiny black hair that framed her face and accentuated her high cheek bones.

"I was about nine or ten when we came here. I couldn't speak English very well and I didn't know what electricity was. Refrigerators, televisions and movie theaters were all new to me and it was overwhelming. I had never seen running water from a faucet. It had been a big event back on the reservation when they installed a pump. There was just one for all of us, and we had to walk several blocks to get to it, but it was better than going to the creek," she said. "Cartoons were something that I didn't understand. I would watch *Popeye* and wonder how he did all those things to his body. And *Red Skelton* frightened me. I kept waiting for a skeleton to pop out of a closet.

"To be truthful, I hated it. But I have accepted it. The sad thing is that the federal government succeeded somewhat in assimilating my people. Parents quit speaking the traditional languages and now we are well into the second and third generations of children who know nothing of their native culture," said Clovia.

While it's true that powwows are the current way of participating in the ancient traditions still outlawed by the government, authenticity is often sacrificed because of the breakdown between the generations. (A powwow is a gathering in celebration of Indian spirituality highlighted by Indian dancing. Some powwows are held on the reservations while some are held in convention centers so that even the city folk may attend). Clovia told me a story about a powwow she had recently attended where there was a man who was to receive an eagle's feather. An Apache girl presented the feather, which shocked Clovia because traditionally Apache women were not allowed to handle eagle feathers. Truly, Clovia said, it won't make very much difference if Indian ceremonies are practiced if no one can remember what they mean.

While many Indians came to Chicago through the relocation program, some came on their own. When I entered the American Indian Center on west Wilson, my senses were assaulted by the aroma of Chinese take-out. My heels

clicked loudly on the sturdy, old wooden floors as I approached the reception desk. Along the walls hung framed collages of snapshots of Indians in traditional dress, and the hallway was divided by a long museum-type display case that held arrows, beaded breastplates and other authentic looking collectibles. That was where I met Ron Bowan, chairman of the center.

Ron, 50 something, wore silver rings, blue jeans with cowboy boots, and sported a silver-streaked ponytail. He was born on the Menominee reservation in Wisconsin, and he and his wife brought their family to Chicago in search of better opportunities for their children. After researching the educational system in Chicago, he felt that his children would enjoy greater advantages from an urban education than they might have had they stayed on the reservation. The first thing that he recalled was swimming.

"My kids wouldn't have had the YMCA [if we still lived on the reservation]. For six years I was their swim coach and all three of my children have been offered swimming scholarships," he said. "My father had always been active in my life and I understand how important it is to nurture children. I can't expect my children to give one hundred and ten percent if I am not willing to be involved as well. You have to be more than parents to a child growing up in the city. If you don't show

that you care, they can easily get away from you and get hooked into gangs.

"Overall, the city has provided us with a better life—although life is what you make of it—and my kids have been introduced to many different cultures. When I was growing up the only black person I knew of played on the Green Bay Packers. Education is the only way to overcome prejudice and racial intolerance," said Ron.

Ron and his family moved to Chicago in 1980, and he has spent all but five years of that time working in the Uptown community. At the American Indian Center, relief is provided to families who are unable to meet their needs. The center is one of the first of its kind in the entire country. It was born of the need for Indian people to interact with other Indians. To bring all of the people in the community together—to look out for one another—is a primary focus of the center. Indians want to help each other and won't hesitate to help anyone because they believe that life is a circle. Every kindness that is given away is one that will be received later.

"The community sometimes is not aware of how much we need one another. We are not in our element in the city. We might live in the city but we call the reservation our home," he said. "There are big adjustments in coming to the city. The pace of life is hard to keep up with. The rat race drives you nuts. And space. On the reservation we were used to having a lot of wide-open space, but in the city we could reach out of our bathroom window and touch our neighbor's building."

Truth is defined by treaties, but treaties are a generic term. Treaties give us our legal identity and define the land that we call home. The truth is that treaties were not developed by those who were concerned about the survival of our people.

Leading is something that Ron was born to do. His grandfather, James Frechetti, was a chief of the Menominee for 35 years, and his grandparents attended state dinners with five U.S. presidents during the early 1900s. "My grandfather taught me that taking leadership meant taking responsibility. Sometimes that means personal sacrifice in exchange for what is right for the people. I think about him a lot and I hope that I can make one-tenth the impact that he did," said Ron.

Inside the War Bonnet, a gift shop at the center, Ron has proudly displayed his grandfather's two most prized possessions: a lacrosse stick, which he used when he was at St. Norbert College (and he graduated—an Indian exception—at the white institution), and a drum. The drum has a buffalo painted in the center, and the sides are covered with an otter pelt. Ron lifted the drum from the wall to reveal the pouch under the otter's chin where medicines were kept dry. The drum fascinates Ron; it is now his most prized possession. Ron craves its sound. "It is the heartbeat of the Indian," he said.

As Ron replaced the drum on the wall he spoke of his grandmother, who is now 93 years old. His children have discovered the treasures of stories she waited to recall until she had an audience. Ron paused, then told a story of personal tragedy.

"Our son and two daughters here in Chicago are our second family. My wife and I had four other daughters back on the reservation. They died of carbon monoxide poisoning in our mobile home," Ron said. He straightened his back against the chair and folded his arms protectively across his chest. "You go through something like that and suddenly what's important in life is so clear. It has given me the strength to pursue better opportunities. As I get older, things my father told me are now beginning to make sense. Kids should come first, and our elders need to help rebuild Indian values and beliefs so they have a chance in this life. Everyone must remember that this is our future that we are talking about. We have turned the corner as a people. It is up to us to change for the better."

Michael Debassige understands only too well what it means to change for the better. A 21-year-old Canadian Indian who spent the early part of his life struggling to survive, he now works full-time at N.A.E.S. Michael wore his hair in the masculine, Indian ponytail but added a hip-hop twist with the underside shaved. Nikes, blue jeans and a baseball hat gave nothing away of his heritage, but Michael talked to me about growing up as an Indian in the city.

His mother smoked pot while she was pregnant with him, which he believes attracted him to an urban underworld and toward personal destruction. Michael dropped out of school by eighth grade and moved out of his mother's house. Living on the streets, he supported himself by selling drugs. Soon, he was living with different women, and by the time he was 17, he was in jail, where he spent two years there. He is now the father of a four-year-old daughter. Michael was never married and his daughter lives with her mother, but he takes great pride in his daughter and considers it a wonderful opportunity to be a father. "My daughter makes me happy. I never had a father, so now I have the chance to give her something I never had," he said. "I knew I had to change my life when I was in jail, but I had to wait to get out to do it. Now, my daughter is my life."

As Michael dusted the shelves in the library, he told me about a dress he made for his daughter so she could attend a powwow. He said that it took about four hours to complete, but since it will be the first time that she dances, he wanted it to be special. Michael's dreams for his daughter are simple: He just wants to be with her and show her how to be an Indian. He grinned broadly as he told me that she is already able to speak three languages.

Michael cannot read but attends G.E.D. courses in the evening and sits in on classes at N.A.E.S. As a child in the elementary school system, he didn't relate to the white person's world. Michael had a difficult time believing there was a place for him since he was raised by women who spoke only their native language at home.

"Indians are poor. Indians are the poorest people I

know," he said, as he reflected on the ethnic diversity that influenced the neighborhood where he grew up. "White people were always OK to me, the Puerto Ricans always had an attitude, but it was the blacks that I fought with. They would laugh about how the Indians got fucked even though I think that they got fucked, too."

Still, while growing up, he identified more with the Mexicans and the Puerto Ricans and the African-Americans. He didn't speak English very well and didn't do well in school. But after spending time in jail he believes that the white person's economy is the one that can make his dreams come true.

"It's rough," he said. "Growing up in the city takes everything out of you. I don't see any of my childhood friends anymore because they will just bring me down. Besides, most of them are dead, on drugs, or have AIDS."

Michael was filled with anger as a child. Offensive nicknames and the promotion of Indian stereotypes were a reality for him. Once, he was in a drugstore and some other kids noticed his hair—in a braid—and they asked him if he was an Indian. When he said yes, they started laughing and dancing around saying "how." "It's rough," he said again. He has struggled to get in touch with the spirit within the Indian male—the warrior. "I have finally found everything that I was looking for, and it was right under my nose."

To search for the meaning of life and to define a role for himself led Vincent Moreno from his home on the Laguna Reservation in New Mexico to Chicago. He is a student of Indian treaties and law at N.A.E.S., and works as a receptionist at the American Indian Economic Development Association (A.I.E.D.A.) just north of the Anawim Center on north Broadway. He sees his future in uniting the efforts of all Indian people to achieve equality. As an Indian male, he found himself obligated to do all that he can for his people.

"I wasn't always so focused. But, my story is a common one. If you select ten Indian men at random, there will be uncanny similarities. First with school and then with work, we have all had to deal with difficult situations. Touched by failed government programs and alcohol abuse, we have had to look forward in spite of the poverty on the reservations," said Vince.

"When I first came to the city three years ago, people asked me how I could stand living on the reservations in such a poor environment. They didn't understand that these are our homes, where our families are, and where we draw our strength. On the reservations, people still live in pueblos and hogans, except right next door there might be a mobile home with a satellite dish. It's a different world," he said.

Before he worked at A.I.E.D.A., Vince was in a near-homeless state and often lived in lakefront parks. He had only a blanket and a bag of sandwiches, and the sandwiches were what made him stand out as a fake. During that time, Vince decided on a plan for the future. He knew he had something to offer the world and that he was capable of survival.

In some of the classes Vince attends there are white students. He said that they frequently get into heated debate over who is to blame for all of the misunderstandings between the Indian nations and the government. He admitted that he holds white people responsible for introducing alcohol to the Indians, yet reminded me that it was the Indians who introduced white people to tobacco.

"I still feel special that I belong to a culture that is being looked at by large corporations to learn how to accept diversity. Diversity is something I grew up with. In the Four-corners area of New Mexico, there were many nations that were able to exist in cohabitation long before Christopher Columbus came. It's the virtue of our culture," Vince said.

Vince and his generation must "listen to the message of the great chief." The call is to guard the next generation so their hearts won't be blackened, to get back what was lost, and to restore the honor of the Indian people. "I need to tell as many people as I can that being an Indian has never held me back."

An Indian must stay connected to the homeland and must fight for the preservation of land and culture. Over and over, I heard the lament about loss of land and about the importance of being in touch with the reservations. Patricia Tyson is one Indian who did stay in touch with the reservations. Patricia, wearing her white-gray hair pulled back into a bun and a lanyard around her neck, is the director of St. Augustine's Center for American Indians on north Sheridan. She said she remembers the constant traveling back and forth between Chicago and the Sioux reservation. "We went back for births, deaths, and any reason that there was something to celebrate. We grew up eating bologna sandwiches in the back seat," she said.

Another way that Indians keep in touch with their heritage and the individual tribal customs is through art. At the Okee-Chee Wild Horse Gallery on north Clark, Sharon Sklonick, an Apache from Oklahoma, is proud to display genuine Indian art of different nations (Okee-Chee is her Indian name and means "little blue bird"). Sharon believes that Indians can tell their story through their art. Her goal is to ensure that creativity survives and is not smothered because of the difficulty in getting a gallery to represent new artists.

Sharon showed me a case filled with sterling-silver jewelry and semi-precious stones, and then led me to a table where about 50 wild mushrooms—as large as a baseball glove—with etchings of animals and landscapes were arranged. There were also homemade soaps, handmade dolls, and dream catchers made from hubcaps. (A dream catcher is thick string woven onto a round frame of sticks and decorated with turquoise and feathers. They are believed to catch all of a person's bad dreams while letting the good ones through). In the back of the gallery, Sharon has displayed all of the wooden toys she has made. She has a model of Fort Dearborn, complete with towers and people, along with many other wooden treasures. Horses are her favorite, and there are many expressions of that passion in her gallery.

Sharon is amazed at the number of people who don't realize that there are Indians living in Chicago. She has even encountered people who have asked her why she doesn't wear a doeskin dress and moccasins. She also has dealt with the taunts of young men who have yelled "hey squaw baby" at her as she walked down the street.

Sharon had a dream to succeed in business and in art. She has run her gallery for seven years now and said that she feels successful as long as she is having fun. "It was my dream to have my shop, and now I do. Getting the dream is the easy part. Maintaining it is the hard part. You have to decide that it is what you really want and then work for it," she said.

Out of sheer spiritual necessity the Indian community in Chicago has come together. Indian spirituality is demonstrable. Each person is equal to the next. In one ethnic Indian story, a man was on a beach collecting crabs in a bucket with several non-Indians. All the other men had trouble keeping the crabs in their buckets, but the crabs stayed in the Indian's bucket. Why? Because they were Indian crabs. When one tried to climb up above the others, they would always pull him back down. Within the Indian community of Chicago there is the same diversity and levels of success that exists in white society, yet the characteristics of the Indian show up equally.

Most Indians believe there is a creator, and that man does not need a mediator between himself and his creator who, significantly, is a woman. Indian spirituality is the way that they live. They have found ways to be Indians in a society that wants them to be Native-Americans, and they will continue to do so. It is the virtue of their culture. □

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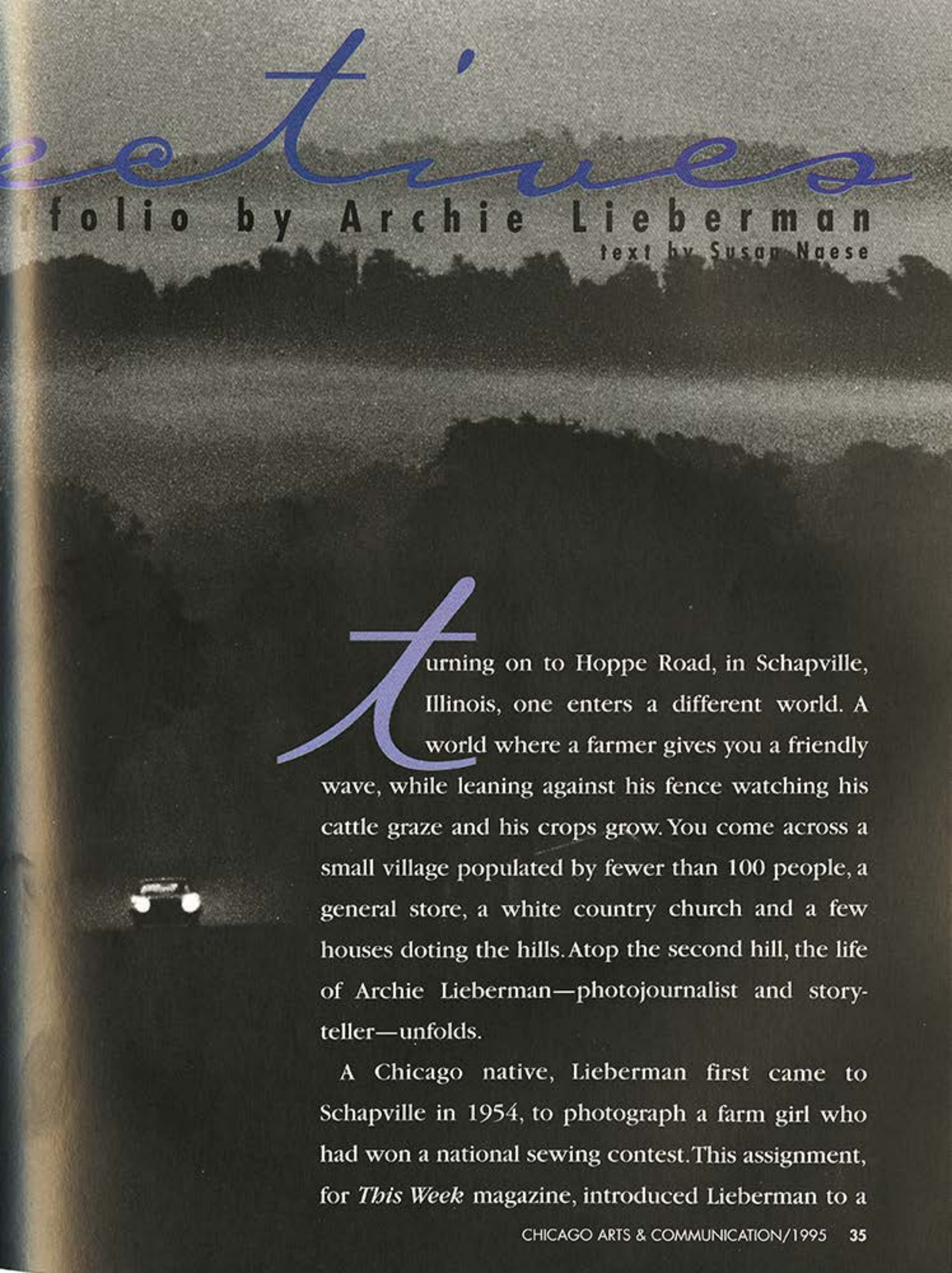
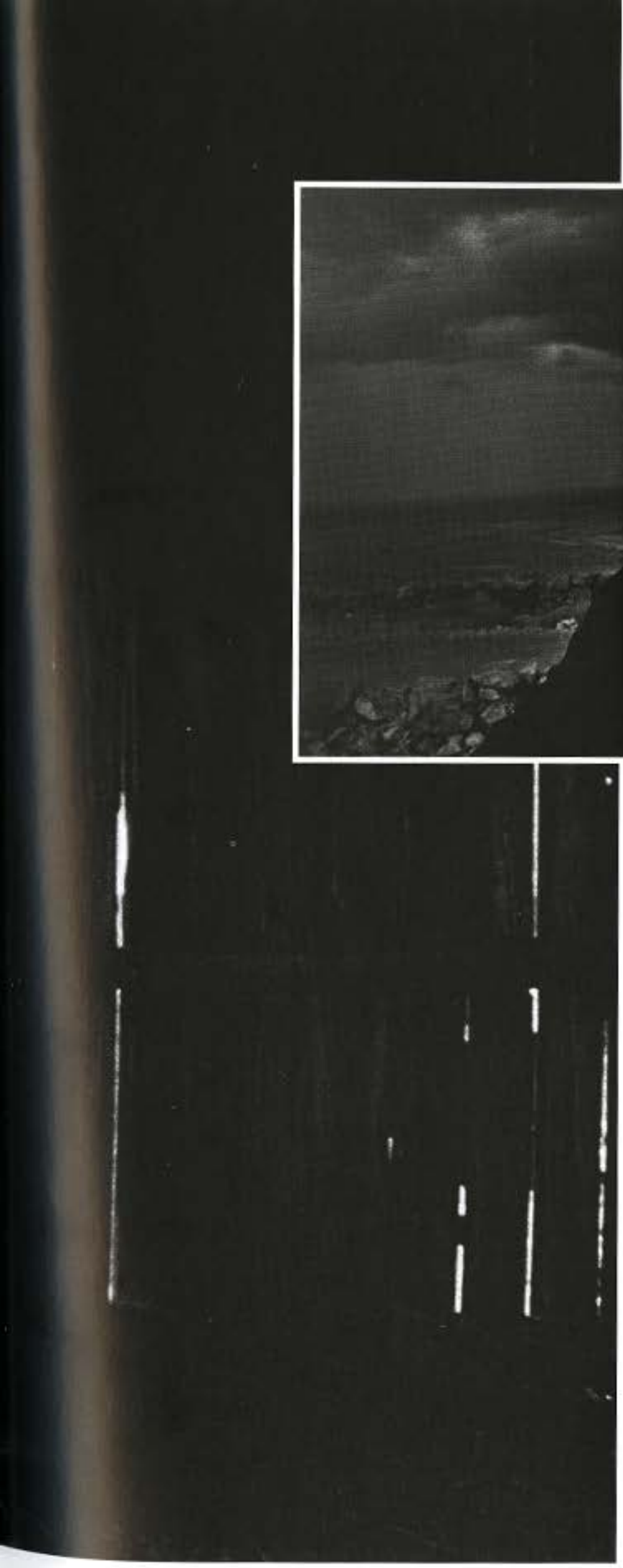


Turning on to Hoppe Road, in Schapville, Illinois, one enters a different world. A world where a farmer gives you a friendly wave, while leaning against his fence watching his cattle graze and his crops grow. You come across a small village populated by fewer than 100 people, a general store, a white country church and a few houses doting the hills. Atop the second hill, the life of Archie Lieberman—photojournalist and story-teller—unfolds.

A Chicago native, Lieberman first came to Schapville in 1954, to photograph a farm girl who had won a national sewing contest. This assignment, for *This Week* magazine, introduced Lieberman to a



previous page: *Shapville Road. Shapville, Illinois.*
left: *Bill Hammer Jr. and his son, Jim framed by the barn door. Shapville, Illinois. Neighbors.*
below: *Near Masada. The Dead Sea, 1960. The Israelis.*

place he would photograph for the next 40 years and would eventually call home. His studio, in a little red shed near the horse barn, is packed with the lifelong work of a successful photojournalist.

Lieberman was born in Chicago in 1926. He studied at Chicago's School of the Art Institute with Vories Fischer. He also attended, what was then, the Institute of Design in Chicago (now, the Illinois Institute of Technology) with Buckminster Fuller, Arthur Siegel, and Aaron Siskind. Upon graduating, Lieberman began to make his mark in photojournalism.

The first photo assignment he ever had was for the premier issue of *Modern Photography*. "They asked me to do a picture story in Chicago. It took two weeks," said Lieberman. This was the beginning of a long and impressive career of telling stories through pictures.

Look, *Life*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Colliers*, *Fortune*, *Newsweek*, *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, *Chicago*, and *North Shore* are some of the magazines Lieberman's photographs have appeared in. He did 120 photo assignments for *Look* magazine alone, from 1952 to 1972. His magazine assignments have taken his all over the world and to all 50 states.

In 1960, Lieberman spent four months in Israel researching *The Israelis*, which was published in 1965 by Quadrangle Books. The book also won two awards, The Chicago Book Clinic award and The Best Fifty Books award, in 1965 for its striking photography and writing. Later a traveling exhibit was sponsored by the state of Israel.

Lieberman has also developed many special projects in his hometown of Chicago. One was about Trumbull Park. It was a three month project about blacks moving into a tough southwest side, all white, housing project.

He told the story through the pictures of a 13-year-old black, orphan child living in a Chicago slum with the odds stacked against him.

Another project based in the Chicago area took Lieberman three years to complete. The project was about five men on death row in Cook County jail. One of them was Vince Cuicci. "Cuicci asked me to spend his last day with him, the warden, the priest, and his mother." According to Lieberman, Cuicci asked him to "take one last picture of me and my mother." He was executed later that night.

Advertising and corporate work also provided Lieberman with other ways to tell his stories and he took advantage of this opportunity to expand his work.

"When I saw that magazines were going out of business, I took advantage of the fact that advertising agencies had asked me to do work with them. At first, I had said, 'No. No, I am a journalist. I am not going to do stuff for you.' But then the stuff that they asked me to do was exactly the kind of pictures I like to make," he explained. Lieberman has done work for Lands' End, the Museum of Science and Industry, the University of Chicago, McDonald's, Motorola, Allstate Insurance along with many other companies.

His most recent promotional project, for the Pioneer Seed Corn Company, includes pictures Lieberman likes to take—ones with a human presence. The picture could be a cornfield, but there is a tractor or a small house in the background. Lieberman said that, "that's [adding a human presence] some of the stuff that photojournalists can do. I do a lot of commercial work, but I have not really wavered from what I used to do for magazines."

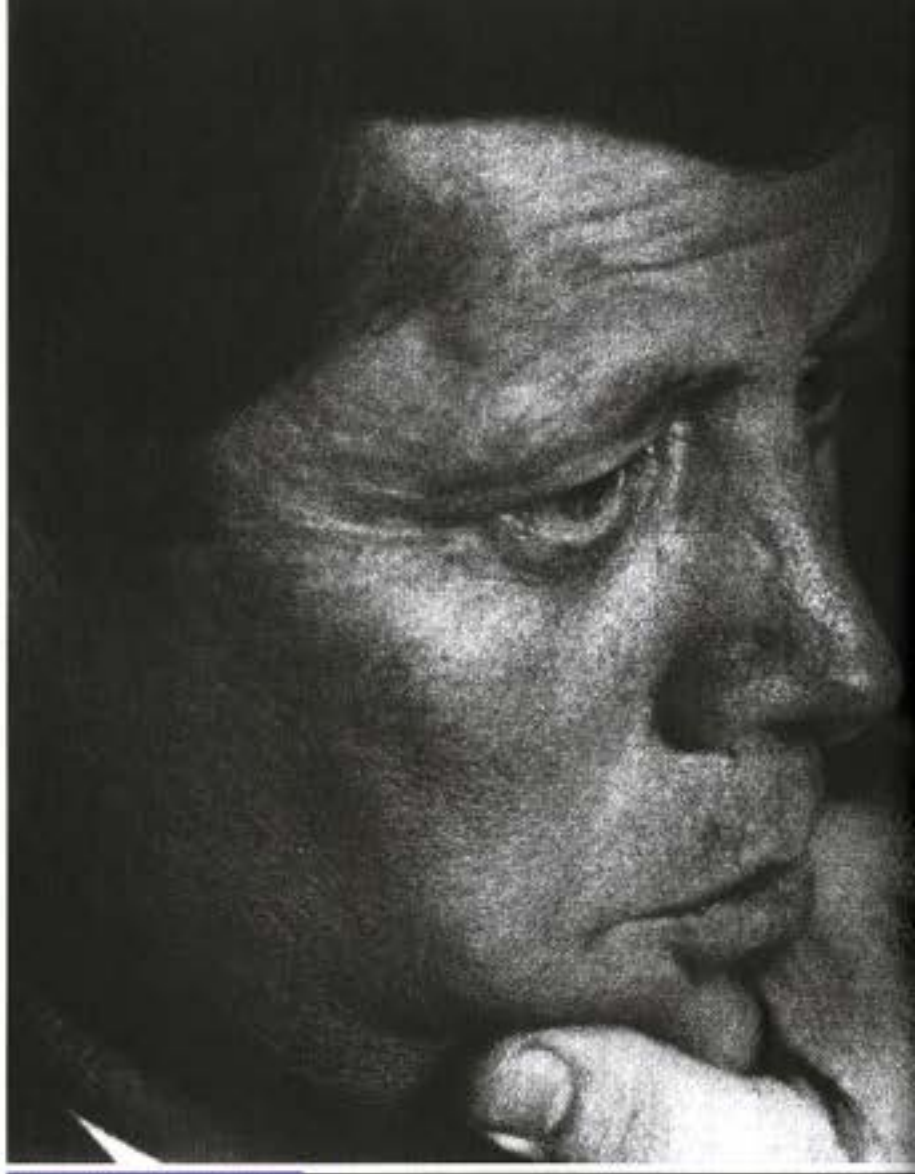
Taking pictures to tell a story is the most important part of the job for Lieberman. On a high shelf in his office, Lieberman has a box labeled "objects." These "objects" are different from everyday objects in that they have a story with them that Lieberman will be able to tell through pictures and words. This is what photojournalism is to Lieberman.

According to Lieberman, the photographer is—besides a storyteller—a poet. The artist "composes" his picture inside the camera. "There are all these wonderful photographers who are so great that they call themselves artists. What they all have in common is that they are really poets. You become a poet when a kind of work transcends the meaning of self. So the painters, photographers, sculptors, artists and musicians are really poets when they transcend the material." Poetry is what Lieberman looks for in his work and in the work of other photographers.

Looking for "poetry" in pictures is not easy for any photographer, but can be found, sometimes, when Lieberman is not looking for it.

"Some of the best photographs made are the ones that crop into the corner of your eye when you least expect it. I always hope this happens on personal or assigned projects, because I am always looking for something that tells more of the story than could be suspected," he explained.

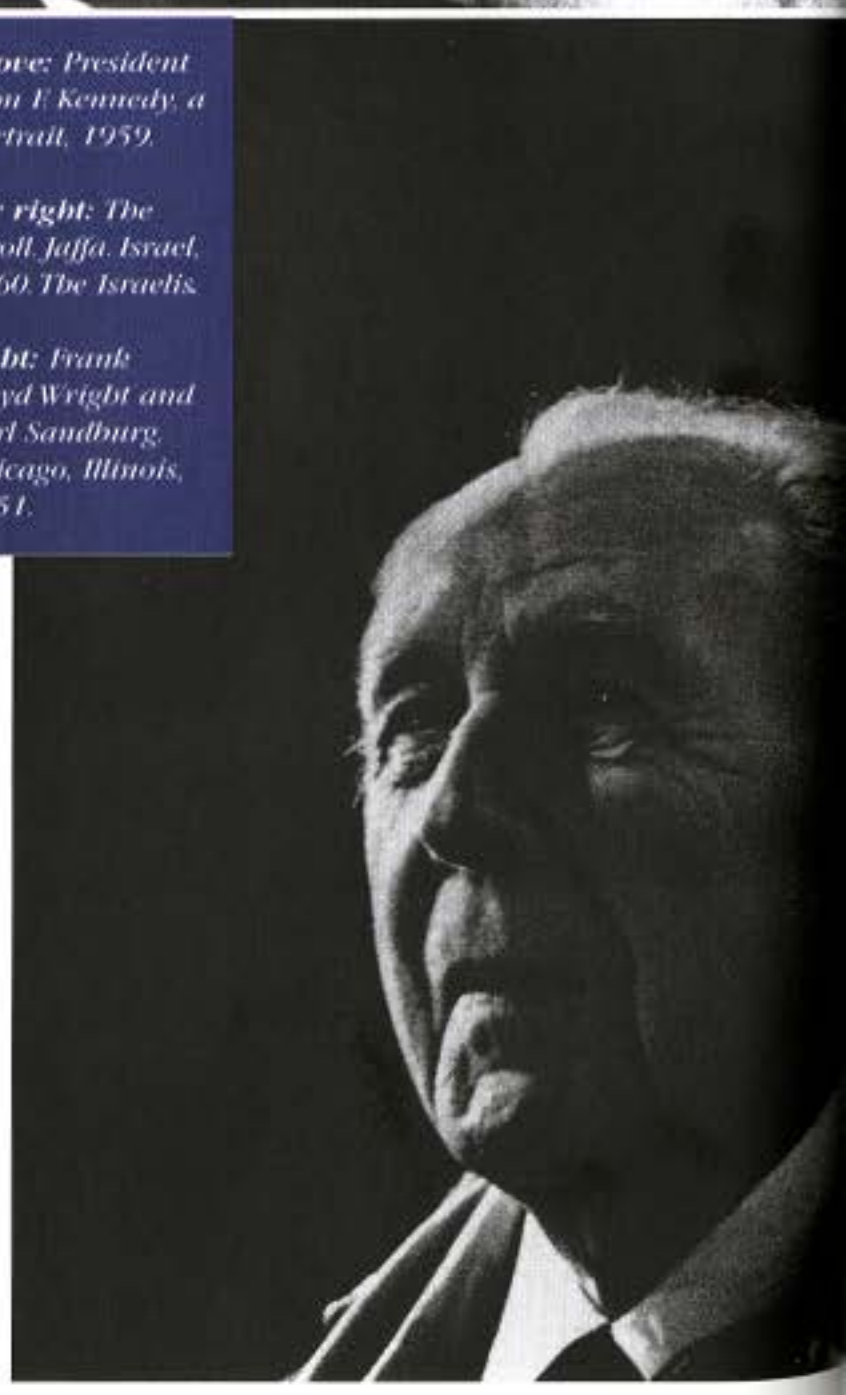
The pictures he finds in the corner of his eye have won him many awards. Awards from the University of Missouri School of Journalism and Chicago Art Directors are a few of many. Lieberman admits that the awards are nice. "It's nice to be recognized, but when you hear the Nobel Peace Prize being given when nobody deserves it.



above: *President John F. Kennedy, a portrait, 1959.*

far right: *The Scroll. Jaffa, Israel, 1960. The Israelis.*

right: *Frank Lloyd Wright and Carl Sandburg, Chicago, Illinois, 1954.*



I mean, if there is no peace, then it should not be given." Awards are not important to Lieberman. He feels the same about his work whether it is award-winning or not.

His award-winning work has been exhibited across the United States and Canada. Exhibitions in Chicago have included those at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, the Marriot Hotel (*Getting There—A People's View of Urban Mass Transportation*), and the Art Institute (*Farm Families*).

In addition to *The Israelis*, Lieberman has published 22 books. One of them was *The Mummies of Guanajuato*. Lieberman has said that, "with a camera up to my eye I can witness almost anything." In this case, he proved it. The work contains pictures of the mummies displayed in the Mexican town if Guanajuato.

The book took a relatively short period of time to put together. It took 20 minutes to photograph the mummies and a week for Lieberman to make the prints and lay them out. Lieberman then saw a story called *The Next in Line* by Ray Bradbury and thought it was a great story to go along with his mummy pictures. Lieberman enlarged the text of the story and took it to his publisher at the time, Harry Abrams. Along with the pictures and the story, Lieberman brought a box of Yummy Mummy cookies. Abrams was sold. He bought the story from Bradbury to go with Lieberman's photos and the book was published in 1978.

right: *Turky, Finland, 1970.*

below: *Truck Mechanic cleaning up after the day. Rockford, Illinois, 1956.*

Lieberman is always looking for subjects for his books. He has two books presently in the works. One book, *The Corner of My Eye*, will be a collection of his best work. Lieberman is also working on a book about AIDS patients. He has already collected drawers full of material and information for it.

In each book Lieberman tells a story not only with his pictures, but also with his words. When asked about the phrase: A picture is worth a thousand words, Lieberman simply replied, "but not without words." He continued to say, "Look, when I was a kid an aunt read to me *Aesop's Fables* and in my head I saw pictures. I thought this was quite remarkable—that somebody could use words and you could see pictures." To Lieberman, words and pictures are inseparable. "That's why we use icons, so that everyone knows the meaning of a thing. But they are really words at that point, aren't they?" In his mind, the picture never stands alone.

In his book, *Farmboy*, Lieberman wrote about a farm boy and his family during the 20 years of their lives in the Schapville community. The story of the Hammer family was told primarily through pictures, but words were used to tell the story behind the people in the pictures.

Neighbors, the continuation of *Farmboy*, includes the whole Schapville community surrounding the Hammer family. Through the 40-year focus on the community, people became accustomed to Lieberman taking pictures and asking questions.

"For instance, in church, when my camera goes off, the people realize that, 'Oh, that's just Archie,'" explained Lieberman.

The people of Schapville understand that Lieberman is telling a story that needs to be told: one of a slowly disappearing way of life in rural areas. Lieberman's wife, Esther, has become an activist in preserving the small rural community by preventing a four-lane highway from destroying the beauty of JoDaviess County. "It is a wonderful county and we want to keep it that way," Lieberman explained.

Lieberman may seem occupied with his photography projects that involve Schapville, but he still receives numerous projects from the outside world. Before leaving his office/studio for the day, he called the local post office in Scales Mound. "Any interesting mail come in for me?" he asked. The person on the other end promised to keep the post office open a little longer so Archie can pick-up his next photo assignment. □

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SHALL WE talk?

Yes, but first you have to read the book

by Kim Siemienas

On the second Wednesday of every month a group of 10 to 15 individuals meet to discuss life, love, war, adventure and other topics that influence their lives. The group is a literary group—where book lovers can get together for intellectual stimulation as well as to socialize. Although the group doesn't consider itself a support group by any conventional definition, it offers the same camaraderie, insight and nurturing benefits as one. Attending one meeting can change any preconceived ideas about such groups.

I had no idea what to expect when I attended my first fiction club meeting at a Barnes & Noble bookstore. Thoughts that a book club must consist of a bunch of nerds who sit around with bifocal, black, horn-rimmed glasses to evaluate classical literature ran through my head, along with assumptions of a pipe-smoking, snobby instructor-type that would boggle me with literary terms and deep analysis.

Instead, I met Rich Roecker, a Barnes & Noble department supervisor and fiction club leader. He strolled up sporting a smooth-looking outfit, like something from the Gap, coffee in one hand, book in the other. He was not a "professor-type" by any means, but a cool, everyday guy. The bookstore itself was also a very comfortable setting for the meetings. What better place to have a book club meeting, than to be surrounded by books and bookshelves? While you are thinking and listening, your eyes wander across the many shelves of new books. Famous titles such as Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* jump out and inspire you to read.

The group meets in a quaint circle surrounded by warm brick walls, reminiscent of a cozy fireplace. Sometimes they meet in the back of the store, near the children's section, where pictures of Mother Goose, the three little pigs, and Goldilocks cover the walls. It's a fairytale-like setting to discuss a story. At other times, the group members huddle together in the center of the store, on cushioned chairs, sipping coffee and hot cocoa from the Starbuck's, conveniently located in the store.

Knot For You

The meeting begins when Rich brings up a funny part of the book, or prods the group with an off-the-wall question such as, "Did anyone else feel like they got seasick when they where reading *The Shipping News*?" *The Shipping News*, the 1994 Pulitzer Prize winning novel by E. Annie Proulx, is a story about a third-rate newspaperman named Quoyle, whose hard life includes a mean two-timing wife and two daughters. Before he met his wife, he was a lonesome, heavyweight guy with few friends and little to live for, so when he finally meets his wife, he is so happy to have someone to love, that he allows her to step all over him. Like the sea, his life on the Newfoundland coast, is filled with an ebb and flow that Proulx somehow conveys through the rhythm of her

Reading is an escape from reality which allows one to enter an imaginary world and become one of the characters

words. I managed to miss all the symbolism of the sea when I read the book, but by attending the fiction club meeting and hearing others discuss their views and interpretations, I was able to better understand the story and how it was written.

An active member of the group shared her insight with the others by reading definitions of the symbolic terms, from the *Mariner's Dictionary*. The name of the main character for instance, Quoyle, symbolizes a coil of rope: "Anything gathered together into a circular or spiral form." These definitions lead to an hour of discussion on characterization, symbolism and themes. Aside from the theme of the ocean, Proulx uses other related topics such as ships, fishing and, most importantly, knots used by fishermen. She begins each chapter with an anecdote from the *Ashley Book Of Knots* and weaves a tangled life for Quoyle by revolving his life around a particular type of knot. For example, chapter two, *Love Knot*, is about Quoyle's complicated love life. The anecdote starting the chapter states that in the old days a love-sick sailor might send the object of his affections a length of fishline loosely tied in a true-lover's knot. If the knot was sent back intact, the relationship was static; if the knot returned snugly drawn up, the passion was reciprocated; but, if the knot was capsized-tacit, advice was to ship out.

Coffee Will Stunt Your Growth

Coffee Will Make You Black, by April Sinclair, another book the group read, is a humorous, heartwarming, coming-of-age story told by Jean Stevenson, a young black girl growing up in the 1960s. It was a wonderful book for a group to discuss because everyone interpreted the story differently, as they related it to their own childhood. The story brings the reader back to childhood-innocence, by focusing on awkward situations that everyone can relate to. The very first line of the book grabs your attention: "Mama, are you a virgin?" The rest of the book is equally entertaining and unpredictable. "I can remember when I was eleven and was curious about boys and sex," said one group member, "I was just like Jean Stevenson." Another member identified with Jean's mother and recalled a time in his childhood when his mother wouldn't answer any of his questions about growing up. "I feel like I grew up in the same house with Jean Stevenson," he said.

Because this story was such an emotional trip down memory lane, most of the discussion at the meeting was about the power of words and how Sinclair impacts the reader with setting and style. The neighborhood Jean grew up in is described as a small town, where some people are poor and others are just getting by. "The warmth of the setting is what kept me so intrigued," an active member said. "I didn't want to stop reading the story because I didn't want to leave the little town on the South Side of Chicago," where the story takes place. People paint pictures in their minds of the characters and the settings. They create a fantasy world—a world of their own. Reading is an escape from reality and allows one to enter an imaginary world and become one of the characters. This quality is what sets reading novels aside from any other form of entertainment.

Non-Readers Keep Out

Once Rich gets the ball rolling, the group talks continuously for two hours—becoming part of the novel—the inside of the story they are discussing. When 10 to 15 people get together to share an experience or talk about a journey they all have taken, the power is overwhelming. A certain aura surrounds the group; suddenly, everyone has walked the same road, met the same people, and shared the same thoughts. People walking by the group are intrigued by the energy, so they stop to listen, but they cannot understand. Unless you have first read the story, you can not understand the language of the group, not because the language is abstract, but because you have not taken the journey with the others. Everyone in the group has joined a family. That is why people belong to these discussion groups. They are not nerds or loners; they are people who enjoy mental stimulation and the company of others.

April Colon, a 31-year-old woman with two children and a full-time job, described the fiction club as a social outlet. "I go to the meetings to have fun and to add another dimension to the book I have read. Meeting with others to relive the experience reminds me of parts that I might have missed in the book." Free time is hard to come by for April, since she also attends night classes to finish her bachelor's degree, but she makes it a point to attend regular book club meetings.

The group consists of others, like April, with busy lives and busy schedules. Most of the members work full-time during the day, have families, friends and other interests. They are teachers, doctors, mothers, fathers, secretaries, and waitresses; people with different backgrounds and people of all ages. They are not coming to book meetings because they have nothing better to do, rather, because they enjoy the discussion, the laughs, the ideas and the intriguing interpretations that fill their minds when they go home—inspired to read another book.

Because the members have busy lives the group often choose quick-reads—short novels usually on the best-seller list. At the end of every meeting, the group is invited to stick around and choose a book for the following month. Everyone walks around the store for a few minutes and picks out books that catch their attention. They then bring them back to the circle to review and decide by taking a vote. The book with the most votes is the next month's chosen book of discussion.

Bring your couch but leave your name at home

The group is both intimate and anonymous. Five members are die-hard fans and attend meetings regularly. Since the group started, approximately two years ago, they have gone to every meeting without knowing each other's names. This anonymity is comforting and allows the members to be more outspoken and divulge themselves and their thoughts. I learned that the group has therapeutic value in that people can go to these meetings, speak their minds and leave, without having to disclose who they are. Some people reveal their souls at the meetings. One girl started crying and told the group how her father was an alcoholic, like one of the characters in the book being discussed. They identify with the stories and relate them to personal situations. It's all part of interpreting a story. What one person understands to be true might be the complete opposite of another's interpretation. That is the beauty and reward of attending such a group. All those present discuss what they liked about the book, what they disliked, how they viewed the story and what the author was trying to say.

Because the group sits in a tight forum, it appears to be private. However, anyone passing by can sit down and join the discussion, even if they haven't read the book. A sign is also placed in the front window of the store every month designating the book of the month and the meeting time.

Denouement

I had the opportunity to speak with Rich after a meeting and I asked him what sets this group aside from other groups and why does he suppose people keep coming back. "This is a fun group, we get together to laugh and maybe even cry," he explained. "We are not in competition with one another for intelligent answers but to enjoy ourselves and take a break from the outside world." He also pointed out that the group has been meeting for over two years now, so they must be doing something right.

Whatever the secret to success is, I enjoyed meeting with others to discuss something fun, but intelligent. It's a nice escape from the classroom because you are not being graded, and it's more rewarding than gossiping with friends. In a way, it's like being a critic. It's always more interesting when you have someone to share a story with who can offer you feedback. □

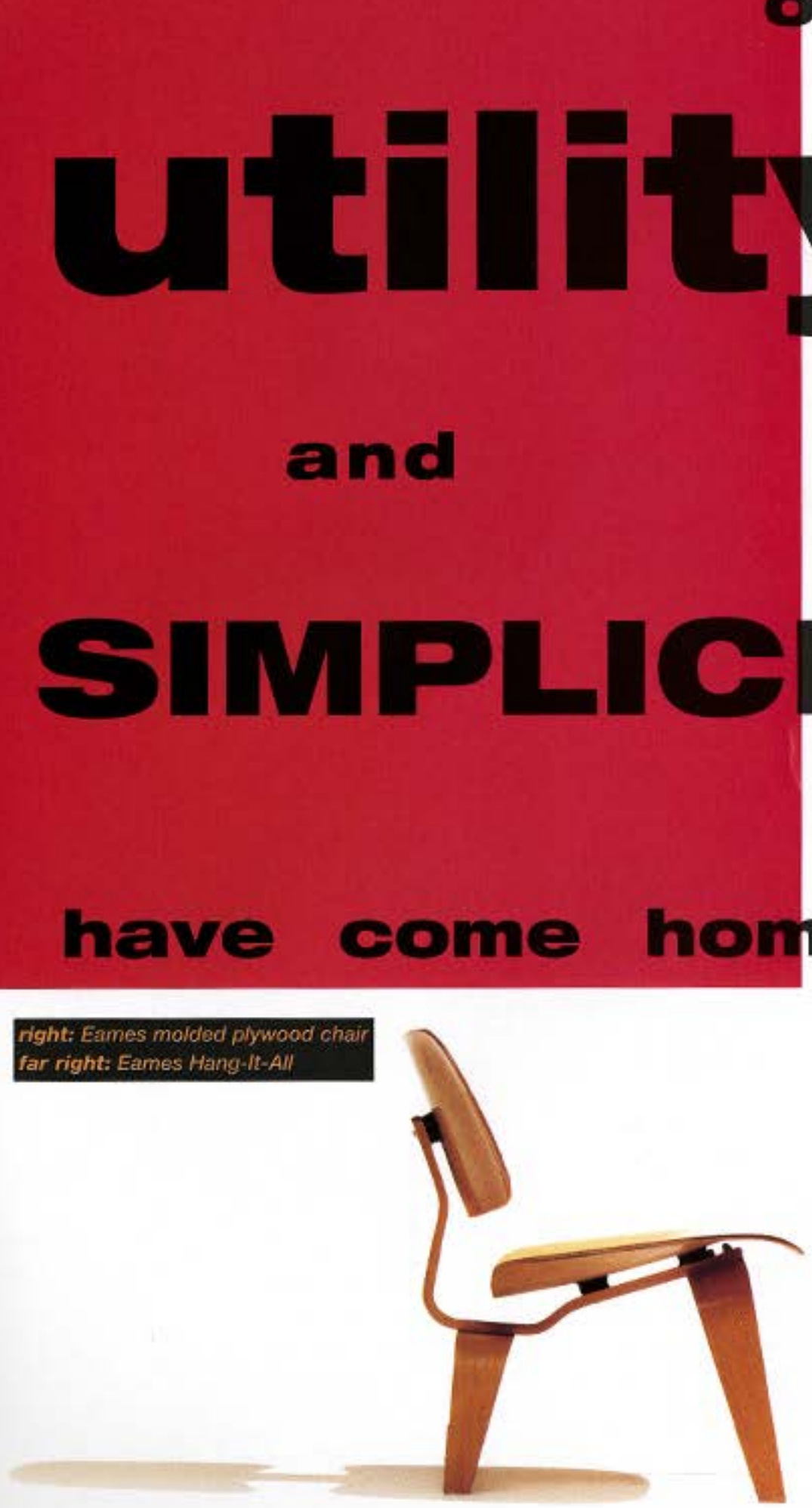
I learned that the group has a therapeutic value in that people can go to these meetings, speak their minds and leave without having to disclose who they are

designed by Allison Buell

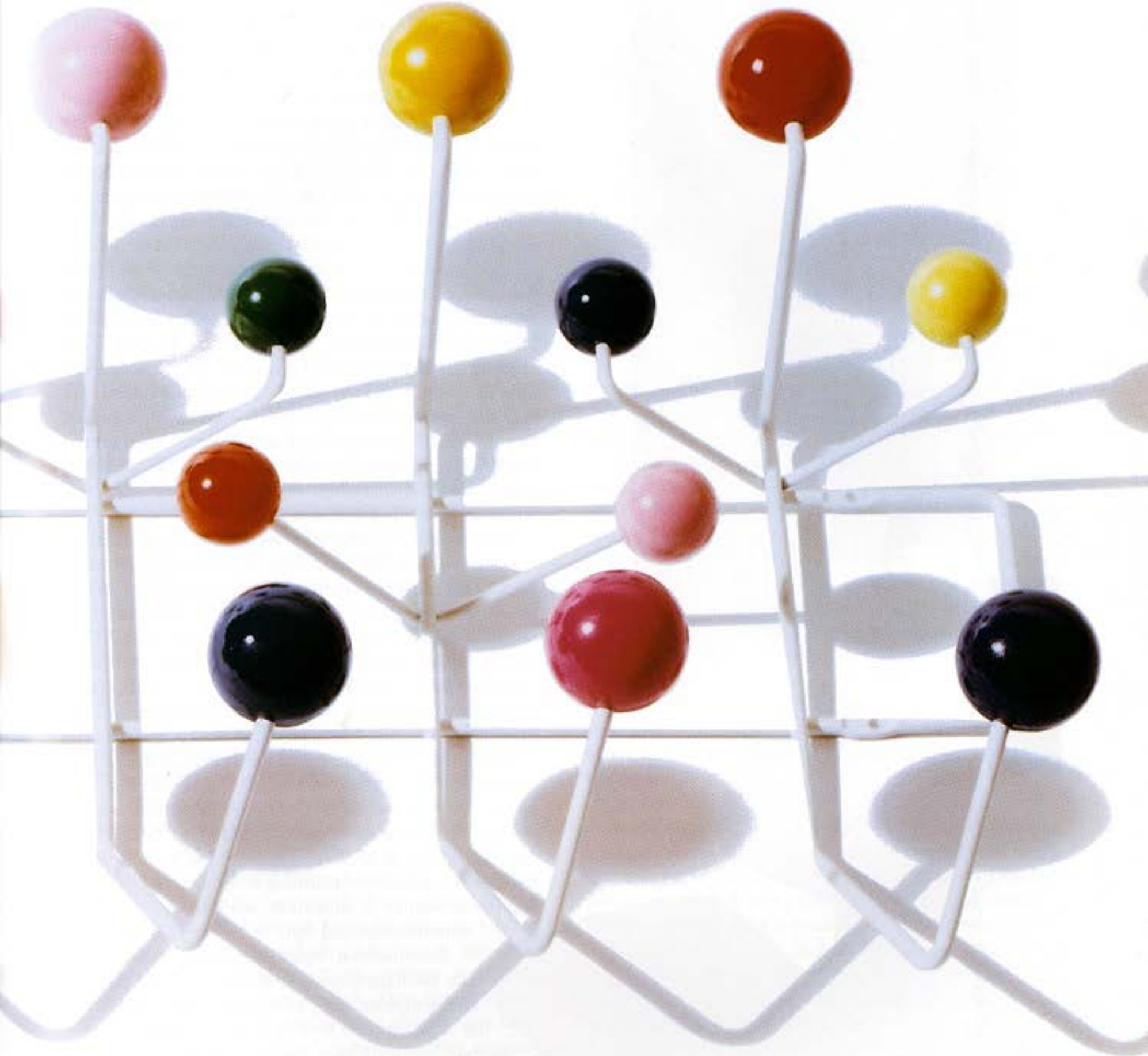
designs of the times

by Chris Rice photographs provided by the Herman Miller Furniture Company

the virtues of utility and SIMPLICITY have come home again



right: Eames molded plywood chair
far right: Eames Hang-It-All



above: *Eames molded plywood screen.*

below: *Eames molded plywood chair.*

There was a time, not so long ago, when chrome-edged, circular taillights spit flickering red flames. When dazzling, neon-edged diners hovered above oversized parking lots. When Disney's image of the modern house, a mass-production prototype dubbed *The House of the Future*, exploded out of the landscape like a giant white mushroom. When the pungent harmonic palette and oddly shaped phrases of jazz teased the airwaves. When artists and designers manipulated space, deliberately throwing off equilibrium.

It was post-World War II exuberance, my friend. Materials like metal and rubber—used for building military goods—were finally available for non-military use. A few less guns and tanks and bombs to build. After the grinding economic hardship of the Great Depression and the horror and uncertainty of World War II, Americans enjoyed seemingly endless post-war prosperity. Americans had money and wanted to spend it. This exuberance was not overlooked by designers—for they embraced new materials and organic shapes. They avoided unnecessary decoration and embraced industrial design, rather than hand-craftsmanship. Modernism, they said, was based on utility and simplicity.

Every major movement has its origins and Modernism is no exception. The rage over Art Deco, named for *L' Exposition Internationale des Arts Decorifs et Industriels Modernes*, an exhibition held in Paris in 1925, began to diminish. By 1931, architects Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock organized *Recent European Architecture*—a major exhibition in New York. It featured the work of Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius from Germany, Le Corbusier and Andre Lurcat from France and J.J.P. Oud and Gerrit Rietveld from the Netherlands. Their book, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922*, appeared a year later. In it, the authors declared that the new commandment of design was: functionalism—architecture conceived as volume rather than mass, regularity of planning without axial symmetry, and the avoidance of applied decoration.

The International Style of Modernism was born.

International Style's principles, derived from the Bauhaus school of design, mingled painting and sculpture with architecture and design. But the International Style was not a slave to "sober Bauhaus realism." Like Bauhaus, International Style emphasized industrial design and low cost, utility and simplicity. Even furniture designers tempered the exuberance of the times with descriptions like "functional," "unadorned," and "furniture for the masses." These oral restraints, however, in no way inhibited their ground-breaking designs.

Take Charles and Ray Eames. In 1938, Charles Eames was awarded a fellowship to study architecture and design at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield

Hills, Michigan—for decades the nation's premier design academy. There he met designer Eero Saarinen, the son of architect and director of Cranbrook, Eliel Saarinen. He also met painter Ray Kaiser; she had studied with Hans Hoffman, in New York, during the 1930s. They married and began design careers that would eventually touch almost every aspect of American life: houses, offices, schools and airports.

In 1940, Charles and Ray Eames and Eero Saarinen became national figures through a competition, *Organic Design in Home Furnishings,* sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art. The competition was intended to "foster attractive, low-cost furniture and exploit new technological possibilities." They were recognized in two categories, one for modular and the other for molded plywood furniture. But the designs were still too costly for the average American. From there, the Eames' moved to California to develop molded plywood stretchers and splints for the United States Navy. This experimental work led to the creation of both the process and the tools necessary to mass-produce their furniture designs.

In the late 1940s, gasoline cost 14 cents a gallon. A Cadillac cost $2,000 and a Charles Eames molded plywood lounge chair, resembling the form-fitting curves of a pilot's cockpit, sold for $25. Today, an original is worth between $300 to $1,200—depending on its condition.

Herman Miller, Inc., the Grand Rapids, Michigan furniture company that manufactured Eames' designs and was at the forefront of the modern furniture design revolution of the 1930s, has, today, reintroduced nine original modern pieces. They include two pieces—a squat, six-drawer miniature chest and slated platform bench—by George Nelson who, in 1946, became the design director for the Herman Miller Furniture Company. (Interestingly, Nelson was also the first to propose the now-popular pedestrian mall in the United States.)

The remaining re-introductions were designed by Ray and Charles Eames, including four pieces made of molded plywood: the undulating folding screen, resembling windswept sand; the coffee table, an indented plywood disk—like a blond dessert plate—tops four arced, tapered matchsticks; the dining and lounge chairs, mimicking the arcs and curves of the human form; the elliptical table, a long, lean surfboard-shaped top that crowns two wire box supports; and the Hang-It-All, a white wire rack, housing multi-colored orbs on each of its centipede legs.

According to Ray Kennedy, Herman Miller's New Business Development Manager, changes to the original designs have been minimal. "The changes were made in an effort to improve the quality of the product. To make it last longer. For example, the folding screen has a polypropelene connecting hinge, instead of the original canvas hinge. The polypropelene lasts longer. The cotton tended to deteriorate."

And so the Postwar Modernism, or the 20th Century Modern, revival begins...began...or continues. However you want to look at it.

For the past 10 years, the public's thirst for Postwar Modern furniture has increased. Who's buying it? Rob Rozycki, owner of VERTU Twentieth Century Arts in Royal Oak, Michigan, said that his client profiles run the gamut. "My customers range from General Motors tech-center car designers to architects to twenty-one-year-old kids who buy what they can afford. Just anyone interested in good design." But within this diverse clientele, Rozycki said, there are two kinds of buyers. One group buys modern furniture because they like it. The other group buys it because it is "important design."

Richard Right, of the John Toomey Gallery in Oak Park, Illinois, has found that, over the years, his most important pieces of furniture have been sold to Europeans, adds that, "Europeans give more credit to American designers than Americans do. It's a very important period [between 1945 and 1960] in American design and one of which we should feel very proud." Right said that many people walk through his gallery tittering, *"You'd love my mother-in-law's salmon Formica table with stainless steel legs, blah, blah, blah, blah."* "They just don't get it," Right laughed. "Many people can't distinguish between ground-breaking design and kitsch."

Kitsch. Googie. Coffee Shop Modern. Call it what you will. It was and is everywhere. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in 1837, might have foreseen this phenomenon when he wrote, "I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic...I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low." During the 1950s, Emerson could have filled his needy embrace with colorful anodized aluminum tumblers, ceramic cookie jars shaped like radios, lamps with cocky rooster bases, glittery vinyl-topped stools, amoeba decked formica tables, hula hoops and Davy Crockett hats. Now, don't get me wrong, I mean no disrespect to this stuff. It's just that it starkly contrasts the ordered, high-brow furniture and decorative art scene of the period.

Or does it?

Modern art has always been praised for its childlike qualities; so, too, has modern furniture design. One thing that the stable, hard-working families of the 1950s did, and did quite well, was produce children—and plenty of them—creating, what is now known as the Baby Boom. Kids in the living room. Kids in the kitchen. Kids on the fire escape. Kids! Kids! Kids! Marketers, not missing a beat, targeted the kids-oriented 1950s; marketing modern art and design for their child-friendly or childlike qualities.

The abstract surrealist Joan Miro used imaginative symbols and flat, primary colors to infuse his work with fantasy and wit. Fuller Fabrics' design studio used Miro's work as inspiration for their Modern Master Print series. One pattern, *Femme Ecoutant,* is populated with humorously ambiguous people, animals, and objects floating inside white bubbles, connected by childlike squiggles on a clay-colored background. The clothing designer Claire McCardell, used Fuller's Miro-inspired fabric in her 1955 dress line. Fuller's Modern Master Print series

was also inspired by Miro's Paris school contemporaries who include Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Raoul Dufy and Fernand Leger.

Best known for his non-moving "sculptures," called stabiles, which manipulated space with inter-penetrating planes, Alexander Calder also created textiles, murals, toys, jewelry and household objects. One of the best-known sculptors of the twentieth century, Calder's wittingly charming genius inspired Lavern Originals' Contempora series of textiles and wallpapers. His interest in the solar system, which inspired his sculpture, also influenced his textile work. *Calder #1*, an abstract fabric design, featured stars, moons, and suns—connected by arches and right angles—in the primary colors of yellow, red, blue and black on white. In 1948, Katzenbach and Warren, the wallpaper design firm, reproduced Calder's mural images in their wallpaper designs.

In the mid-1950s, Elvis' soulful voice, pouty mouth, slicked ducktail and gyrating hips catapulted him into the nation's consciousness. TV sitcoms' laugh-tracks filled the air. Prefabricated houses blossomed like dandelions, converting land, once flat and treeless, into suburbia. The spines of American writers' novels snapped and crackled with incredible regularity including Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), Bellow's *Adventures of Augie March* (1953), Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), Vonnegut's *Sirens of Titan* (1959) and Updike's *Rabbit Run* (1959) among many others. In the early 1950s, bitter criticism was targeted at the "soft" or "cream puff" theories of behind public education. American students, some cried, were falling behind. Critics claimed that progressives had created "a low quality of instruction," and weakened discipline. These things, they said, led to the decline of both moral values and traditional content in school programs.

Truman and Eisenhower ruled.

McCarthy raged, tripped and fell.

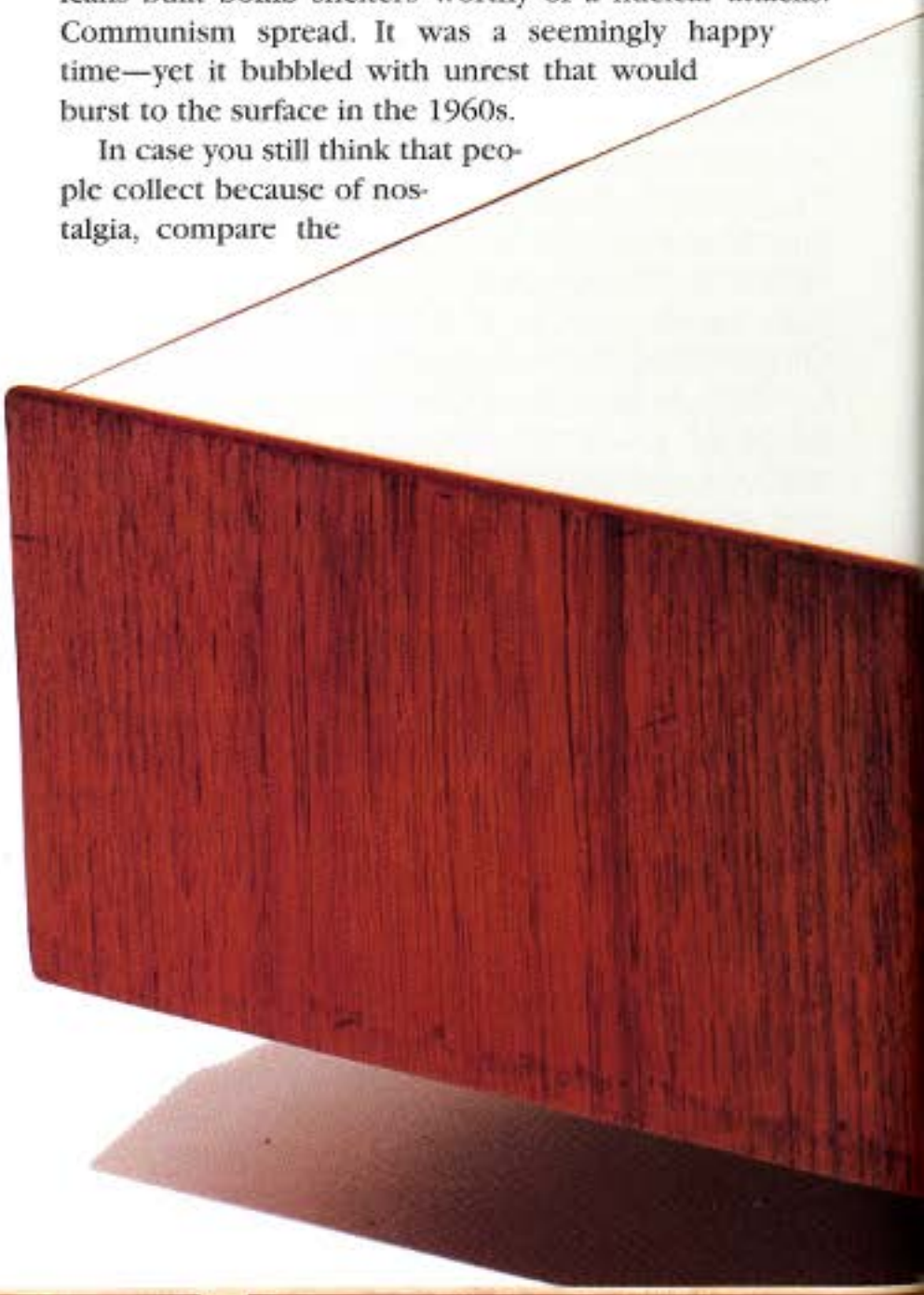
What was it about this time in recent history that lures many people back to its design? More than one hot-aired writer or critic has claimed that people feel a need to recapture long- forgotten innocence and sense of oneness.

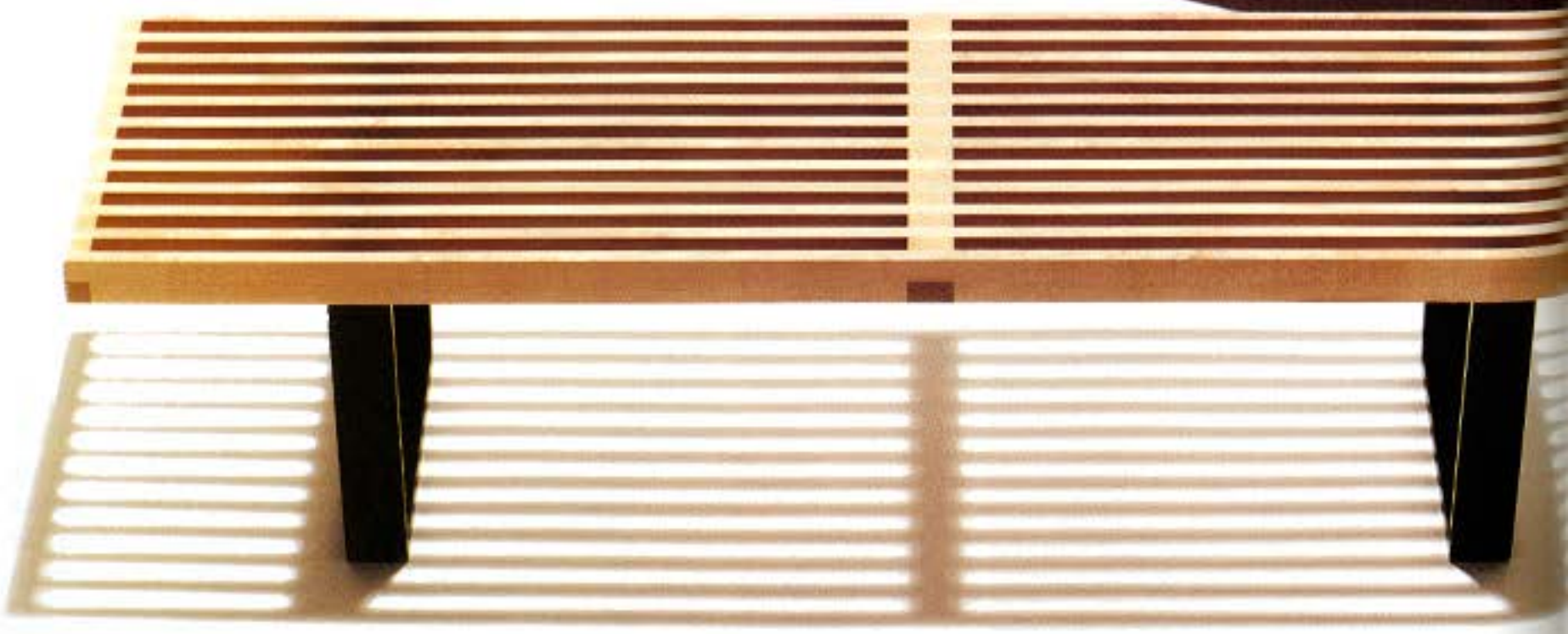
Memories. Nostalgia.

Bunk.

During the 1950s, the civil rights movement had just begun ridding the country of the stench of racism. Americans built bomb shelters worthy of a nuclear attacks. Communism spread. It was a seemingly happy time—yet it bubbled with unrest that would burst to the surface in the 1960s.

In case you still think that people collect because of nostalgia, compare the





below: *Nelson Minature Chest.*

below left: *Nelson Platform Bench.*

prices between today's reintroductions and yesterday's originals. It's not like buying a dog-eared baseball card. A new Eames folding screen goes for $1,300. An original costs between $2,500 and $8,000. The reintroduced Nelson Platform Bench sells for $680. Originals go for about $1,000. "For most customers," said David Skelley, co-owner of Boomerang For Modern in San Diego, California, "it's not a nostalgia thing. They just like the design. It looks just as good today as it did forty years ago."

What sells is what people can afford. And right now, for Skelley, domed table lamps designed by Greta von Nessen are selling. French floor lamps, with perforated cones at the ends of metal arms and circular bases are popular. Clocks designed by George Nelson, manufactured by Howard Miller Clock Company, with thick wire arms spurting from a circular base with Tootsie Pop orbs at the ends—resembling the molecular structure of atoms in chemistry books—are also in demand.

Tom Stoye, a photographer in Royal Oak, Michigan, has been collecting furniture Modernism for the last eight years. In that time, he has bought a lot of junk, made a lot of mistakes and lost a lot of money. But, he contended, it's still worth it. "I'm constantly refining my tastes. I look for the rarest and best design—the most historically important design." And, like many collectors, he doesn't have loads of money. Still, he wouldn't buy a piece only because it's a good deal. He buys what he wants. "Some people buy because they're getting a bargain. Not serious collectors. As a matter of fact I carry a list—in my wallet—of pieces I want to find before I die. I'm not going to write it [an important piece that he wants in his collection] off just because it's too much money. I try to think positively. Who knows, I might find it at a flea market for ten dollars."

Right also pointed out that, "a whole string of *secondary* designers are finally getting noticed. T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, for example, who designed for the Widdicomb Furniture Company in the forties. And designs from the Heywood-Wakefield Furniture Company are popular locally."

Ah, Heywood-Wakefield. The "white-trash" cousin of its much-touted relatives. The part of the family shunned and mocked at family gatherings.

Until now.

Jim Toler of SPRINGDALE "Furnishings for the Modern Family" in New Buffalo, Michigan, said that while Herman Miller furniture is "furniture of theory" and not necessarily "livable," Heywood-Wakefield is exactly the opposite. It is solid wood, he said, of lasting quality. "Heywood-Wakefield's designers weren't *known* like Eames and Noguchi and Nelson of Herman Miller. But they, too, designed coordinated sets, modern design for modern homes. Their designs were influenced by Alexi Sakhnoffsky, an Audi automobile designer—wonderfully rounded, aerodynamic furniture—and very evocative of airstream automotive design. Many of the pieces were even designed by Gilbert Rohde, who was better known for his work at Herman Miller."

Two furniture makers, Walter Heywood and Cyrus Wakefield, began companies in the early 1800s. Chairs made by Heywood, of Gardner, Massachusettes, became so popular, so quickly, that he hired his two brothers, Levi and Benjamin, to join him cut, sand and assemble each chair by hand. Wakefield used rattan, the discarded packing material used by longshormen unloading ships from foreign ports, to make reed. He sold the reed to area basket makers and soon formed the Wakefield Rattan Company. The two companies were rivals until the death of each founder later in the century. In 1897, the new generation of owners merged and voted to create the Heywood-Wakefield Company. Early in the next century, Heywood-Wakefield noted the commercial impact and success of *The Century of Progress Exposition* held in Chicago. Shortly after the Exposition, industrial designer Russel Wright became Heywood-Wakefield's principal designer—only to leave for Herman Miller, a year later. Wright's penchant for clean, sleek appearances however, took shape in Heywood-Wakefield's hard maple furniture. They called this modern furniture *World Fair Modern*, but renamed it *Heywood Modern*, the following year. In 1937, Heywood-Wakefield lured Leo Jiranek, the "popular, though temperamental, industrial designer," of their *Streamlined Modern* series, to their ranks.

Toler has been quietly collecting Heywood-Wakefield for the last six years. Now, he says, it's relatively satisfying to have an entire store full of furniture—furniture that wasn't considered important enough to include in furniture history books—and clients that call from all over the country. "I consider myself an adoption agency for Heywood-Wakefield furniture. You have to understand that people who bought and lived with Heywood-Wakefield for years, decades, really grew very attached to it. I assure them that their furniture will go to a really good home and be used for another forty years. It sounds hokey," he sighed, "but that's exactly the way I feel."

Tom Clarke and Martha Torno own Modern Times in Chicago. "People," Clarke said, "get interested in one thing, buy it up and exhaust the market. In our business, things get very popular and prices soar." For example, a table by T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbens that, two or three years ago, would have sold for $300 is now selling for $800. What's hot now, says Clarke, are lamps designed by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni. The Castiglioni brothers' modern floor lamp, the *Luminator*, combined a simple, vertical steel tube supported by a slim, steel leg tripod. The bulb, screwed into the top of the steel tube, projected light to the ceiling, diffusing it over the entire room. This lighting technique, until the Castiglioni brothers, had only been used in photography studios. The market, Clarke believes, is leaning toward "elegant" furniture: Edward J. Wormley's designs for the Dunbar Company, for example. Wormley's Riemerschmid armchair, based on a famous chair designed by German architect Richard Riemerschmid in 1899, represented a softening in Modernism. The chair, built of solid wood, has gracefully curved arms, strong triangular bracing and an upholstered seat.

Eames molded plywood table

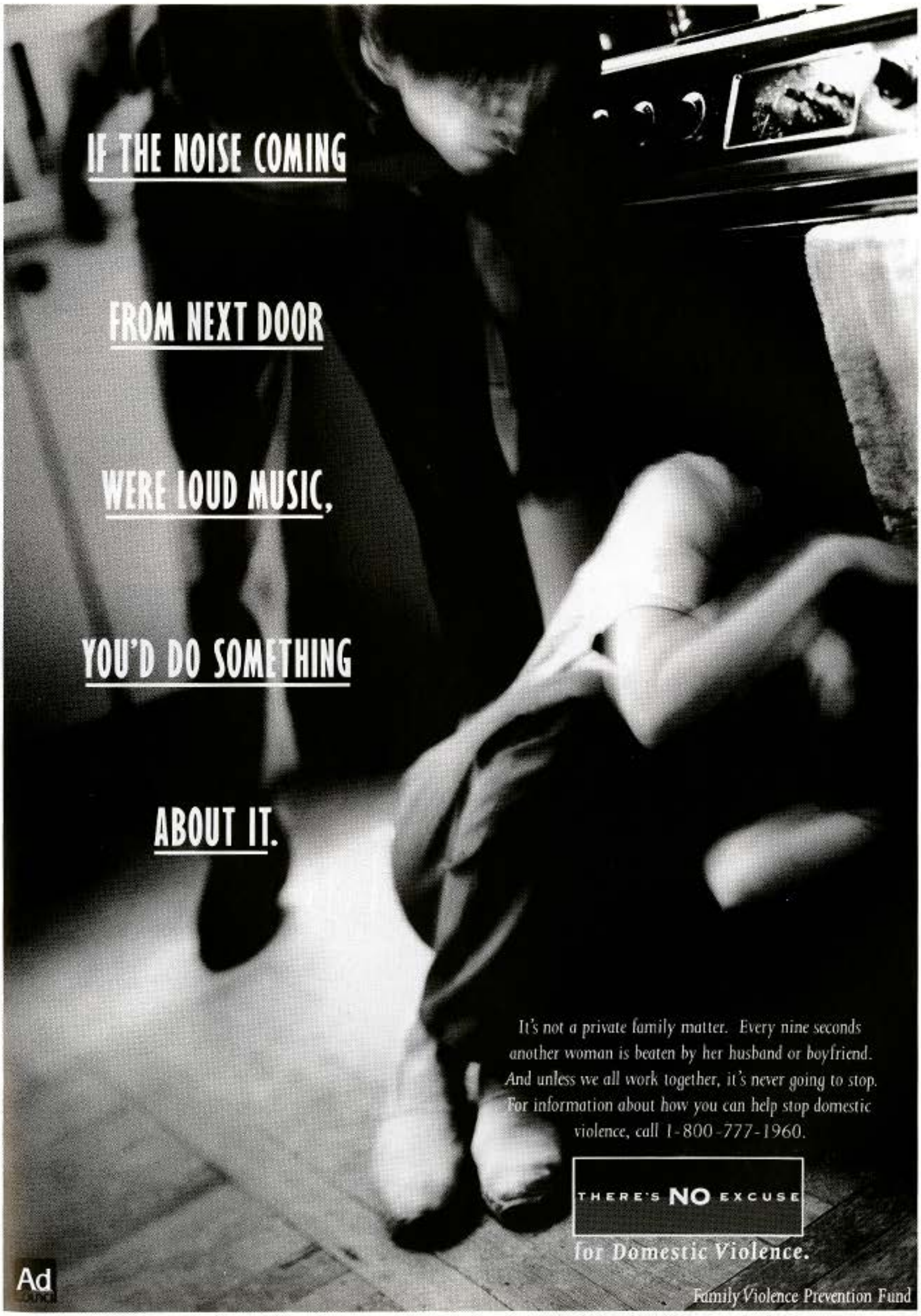
Clarke has also noticed a great deal of interest in the designs of Paul McCobb. McCobb, a leading designer of clean-line cases for the Winchendon Furniture Company of Massachusetts, designed aluminum chairs for the ALCO Corporation's Forecast Program in 1958. The chairs—wide-seated aluminum orbs with flat, wing-like armrests, upholstered bottoms and back supports, and thin, aluminum legs—looked like short, fat aliens.

Speaking in 1959, at Chicago's Merchandise Mart, McCobb prophesied, "The modern revolution is finished and we are all more mature."

Oh, yeah, Mr. McCobb?

The furniture designed during the middle decades of this century took daring, innovation and brilliance. Anyone can see that. That's why so many folks are stepping back, tripping back, through the layers of time, to find solid evidence of past greatness.

Which leaves only one question, Mr. McCobb: Were we more mature then, than we are now? □


IF THE NOISE COMING
FROM NEXT DOOR
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YOU'D DO SOMETHING
ABOUT IT.
It's not a private family matter. Every nine seconds another woman is beaten by her husband or boyfriend. And unless we all work together, it's never going to stop. For information about how you can help stop domestic violence, call 1-800-777-1960.
THERE'S NO EXCUSE
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This boy just wants to have fun

THE MISADVENTURES OF A CLUB KID

by Patricia McNair
photographs by Christopher Finger

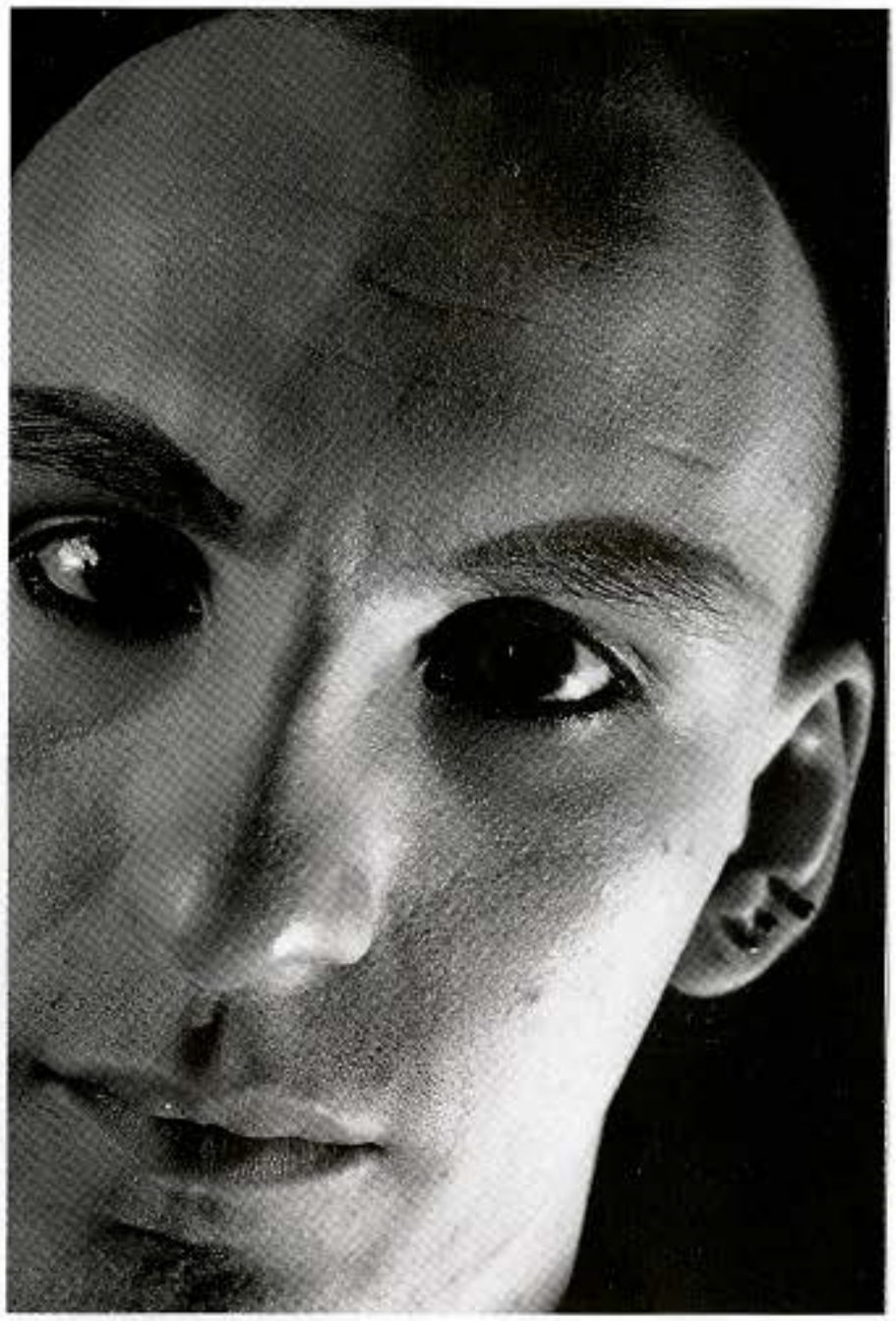
His name is Zoë. Club name: Zoë Orgasma. Of course Zoë isn't his real name, but it might as well be. It's the name he took on more than 10 years ago when he ran away from home under very dramatic (nearly criminal) circumstances—something involving his stepfather, a frying pan, his mother screaming, you know. Anyway, he was little more than an adolescent then, and he ended up living on the streets for about a year in Chicago. North side. Belmont area. He says it was easier back then to not have a home, and be in that neighborhood, than it is now. There were places you could hang around, keep warm, like Dunkin' Donuts on Belmont and Clark. And places you could have fun, like Medusa's and Berlin. Places where even a young teen could get into if he had the right look, the right attitude, maybe a pretty good fake ID. Zoë had the look. His three-inch high mohawk was almost half his age. He's 25. The color changed, depending on the holiday or the theme or his mood. He dresses in whatever he wants. With hair like that, why pretend to be anything he's not?

The day I met him wasn't a club day. "I'm not doing my club kid thing Sunday," he told me on the phone. Translation: Zoë was not going to dress in a high, flashy-trash glamour get-up and host—or take part in—nightclub sponsored—relatively mainstream—events. "I'm doing a drag queen show at Berlin." A drag show, in which men dress as women, apparently, requires a different wardrobe than club kidding. "I'm going to be Cleopatra," he said as he pulled out a spectacularly glittered headpiece from behind the counter at Moon Mystique on Belmont, where he works. "I have a black wig, too." Good. Hard to imagine Cleo with a bright blonde mohawk.

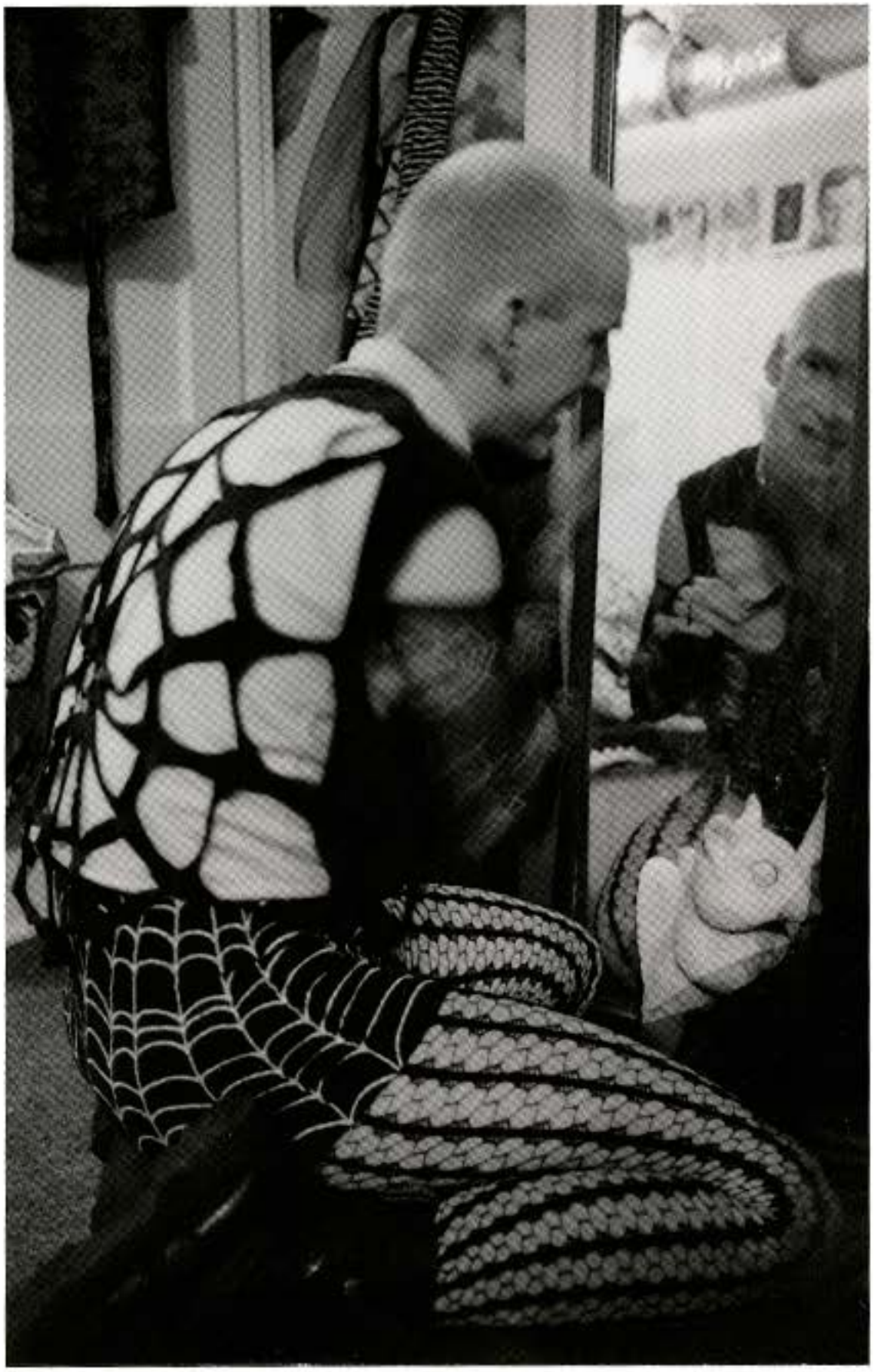
Zoë has a sweet, yet strong, sharp face with eyes so dark you can hardly see his pupils. He looks right at you when he talks, so it's hard not to trust everything he says. It's a quality somewhat unexpected in a club kid: honesty. Club kids are known for their fakery, their fraudulence—the whole farce of it. They make up club names like Boa Boa (another great looking man with soft blue eyes who once was suburbanite Mike Decker) and Lady Astor (a teenager who wants to be a fashion designer). They wear outlandish outfits that sometimes belie their gender and accentuate what they don't have—knee-deep cleavage; high, hard derriers; height enhanced by six-inch stacks (90s platform shoes). The clubs are full of hair extensions, synthetic eyelashes, colored contacts, press-on nails. The club kids often work for the clubs, are paid to have fun, to bring fun in, to put on a show. Or else club kids might host their own Raves (underground parties) and charge their friends to be their guests. It's not like a pass-the-hat-to-get-another-keg sort of thing. These kids often come out with a profit. Cool, popular, glamorous friends you can have for a price.

But Zoë isn't in it for the money. He barely breaks even. Being a club kid is a major part of his life. He'd be one anyway, even if he wasn't working at a club doing promotions. He loves to dress up, dance, talk to people, get attention, give

...they [the Catholic school system] allowed him to keep his mohawk as long as he was still in uniform,



which meant he wore a white shirt and plain pants—except for a few nice days in spring when he wore the uniform skirt



attention, have fun. It just happens to be an added bonus that his job lets him do it. What he makes working at Alcatraz, an all-ages club in the west Loop, one night a week, he puts back into his clothes, his promotional ideas, his club kid toys. He has a real job at Moon Mystique, a book and bauble store that caters to the occult-inclined, somewhat alternative shopper. He works to support himself. Some club kids, those who live for the life, work the angles of the club society to get by. They wear a designer's clothes and promote that product. They host parties. They produce shows. They win contests. They sell drugs.

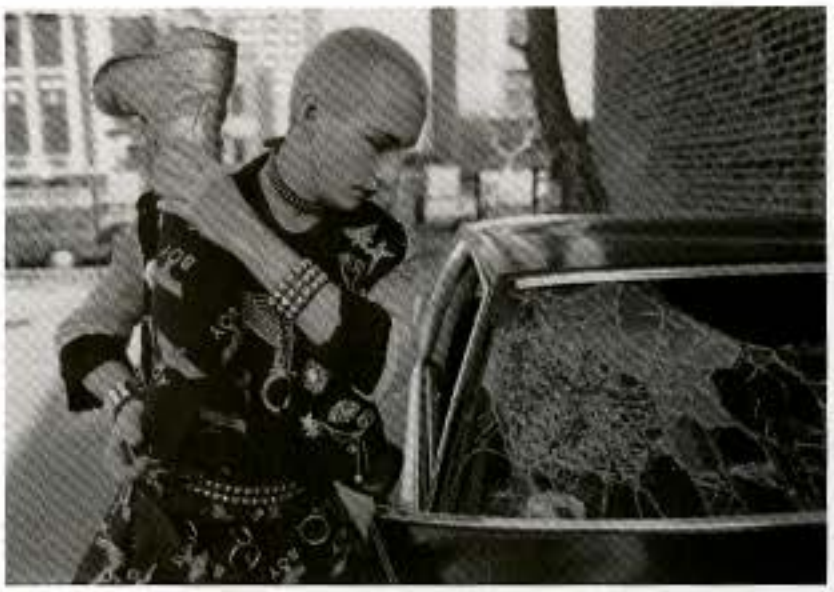
When Zoë spent that year on the streets back when he was young, he thought he might try his own angle. He came up with the name Zoë Bowie just in case what had happened at home put his real name on some most wanted list. He thought he could tell people that he was David Bowie's son, and maybe get some money that way. When it came down to it, he couldn't take advantage of people like that. After that year, he went back home. Things were sort of all right. His mother forgave him, and no one had been critically injured the night he left. Zoë went back to his small Catholic high school where they allowed him to keep his mohawk as long as he was still in uniform, which meant he wore a white shirt and the plain pants—except for the few really nice days in spring when he wore the uniform skirt.

Zoë has been a part of the club scene ever since his year on the streets. Now he lives in Uptown and works and hangs and knows everyone in the Belmont area. More adequately, everyone knows him. We went for a walk that Sunday night to Scenes, a coffee shop in the area, and the servers knew him by name. When we settled in for a coffee and croissant at Dunkin' Donuts, at least six different people saw him through the window and stopped by to say "hi", or to ask what was up for the week, or to borrow bus fare, or to promote an art show.

Even the people who don't know him make some sort of contact with him. An old guy who looked like he was right off his shift at a John Deere plant in some small Iowa town: farmer's cap, Carhardt overalls, grubby fingers and a beefy red nose, smiled over at us. "You from New York?" he asked Zoë, who was dressed in his own normal work clothes: black t-shirt with multi-colored buttons sewn and pinned around the collar, rainbow suspenders, black vinyl hotpants, yellow tights, rainbow legwarmers—up past the knee—and black cowboy boots.

"New York?" Zoë repeated. "No, I'm from here. But I like New York." Then the old guy sort of chuckled. Not mean or anything. Not dissapproving, just amused and friendly. "If you were a sandwich," he said to Zoë, "what sort of sandwich would you be?"

Zoë put his hands in his lap. "Hmmm, what sort of sandwich would I be." He thought about it, taking the question very seriously. "I guess I would have to say I would



be a meat sandwich. That way when you bit into me, you would taste all that's really, really good." Zoë is not a vegetarian. "What sort of sandwich would you be?" He asked the guy.

"Ham and cheese," the man said quickly. He'd thought about it before.

"Why's that?" Zoë asked.

"Because that's my favorite kind of sandwich in the whole world. I love ham and cheese."

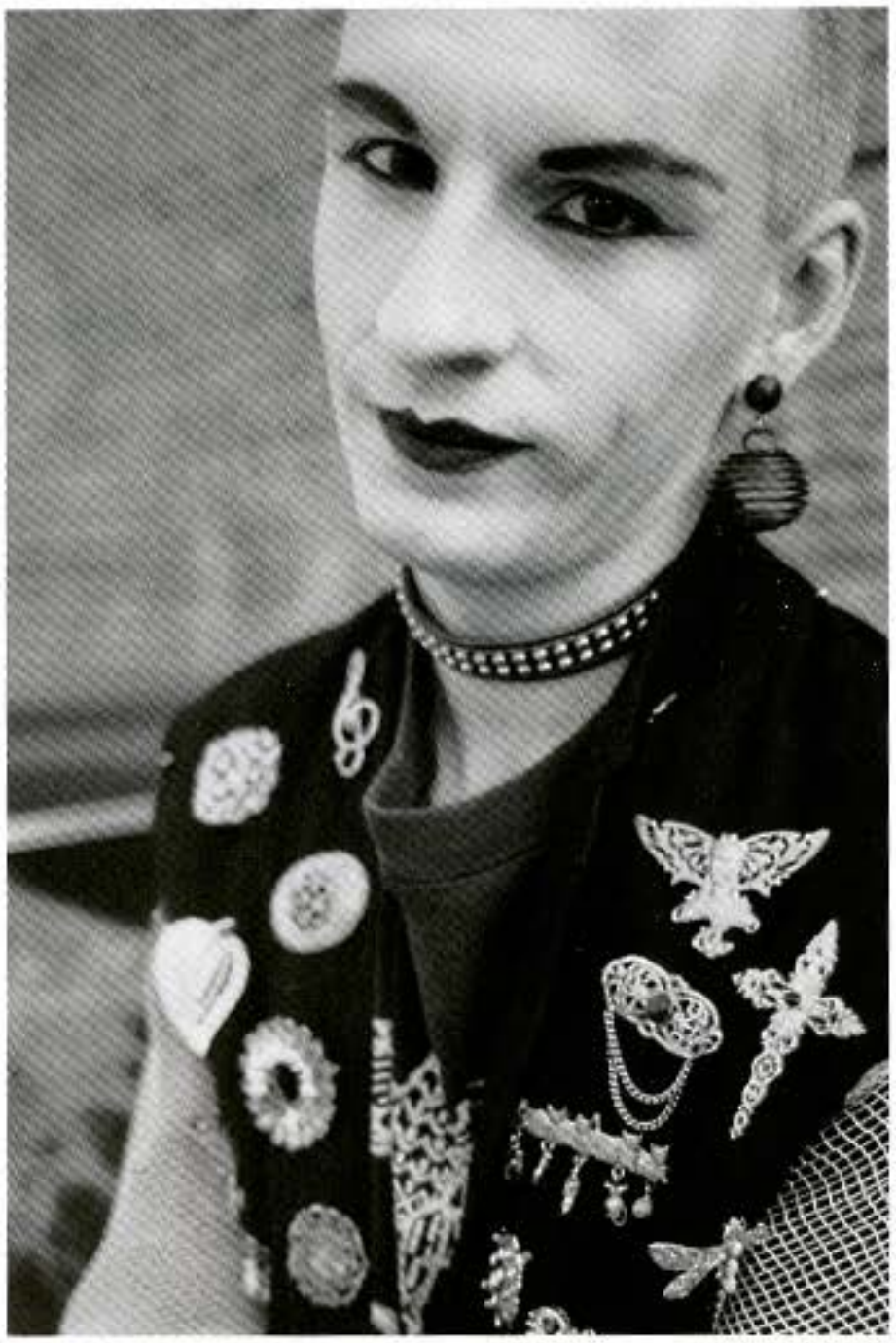
"Good answer," Zoë said.

Zoë likes questions. He loves giving and getting answers. Every week at Alcatraz, he comes up with a question of the week, usually based on the theme of the night. He publishes the responses of the club guests in *Prisoners by Choice*, Alcatraz's in-house magazine. On Hawaii night, when he dressed up in a hula skirt and handed out tiny, brightly colored Hawaiian good luck charms, he asked people what they thought about the island. Hunky men in Speedos. Bugs. No bugs. Sacrificing virgins to volcanoes. The Brady Bunch episode. On Mad Hatter night Zoë wore a red flounced skirt, fishnets, red feather-trimmed bodice and a hat made of crimson ostrich-like feathers and topped with a gyroscopic solar systemish sculpture. "My mom gave me this for Christmas. It's supposed to be to put on your desk or something, but I thought it made a much nicer hat," he confided. The question that night was what do people have under their hats. Bad hair. No hair. Lies. Lost innocence.

"Asking these questions just sort of breaks the ice," he explained. "And it gets people thinking. Connecting. It lets everyone be part of what is going on." It is important to Zoë that he not be the only thing going on at a club. Sure, he likes the attention his obvious presence gets, but, ultimately, he hopes to inspire others to let loose and grab a little spotlight, as well. "I'm a self-proclaimed club kid. A self-proclaimed celebrity. I am responsible for the attention I get, good or bad. But at least that attention draws people to me." He is not fond of the type of club kid who goes to a club, does his for-hire performance, and then steps away from the guests who have come to see him/her. Zoë likes to be accessible. He loves to be on stage, but he wants everyone else up there, too.

Zoë's lover, Chris, has not been all-approving of Zoë's club thing. He's coming around though. His concern is that Zoë puts so much creative and physical energy into his club projects and existence and is barely compensated for it. He feels as though Zoë may be exploited. But Zoë doesn't see it that way. "I would be doing this on some level anyway. It's who I am. It's just nice that now I make almost enough from my club gigs to pay for my club stuff. Clothes and stuff. I love it." He says that he knows a lot of other kids who rely on

Zoë has a very complicated theory about life that involves 999 puzzle pieces and how they all fit together to make all the good things and all the bad things of his existence



Mommy and Daddy and the credit card to finance their fun. He pays for his own. He takes off one day a week from Moon Mystique to plan and prepare his Saturday promotions. He works up ideas for the theme, buys whatever little toys or gifts he intends to pass out to the guests and shops at the thrift stores for clothes. His wardrobe is a combination of things. He is a master of pulling things together, mixing and matching, recycling things. "Every pair of my boots has had many lives. They start out black, then maybe get painted silver, then rainbow, then get pasted with glitter, scraped off, whatever My purses go through the same thing. And this skirt," he indicated the red flouncy thing from Mad Hatter night, "has been worn under things, over things, as a cape, millions of ways." He'll buy things cheap even if he doesn't yet have a plan for them, and months later when he is putting something together, he will find the perfect item that he bought for a dollar in the back of his closet. He loves that. Sometimes he gets an idea for something really spectacular and will work out a deal with a fledgling designer to have it made—in return for promotion. He also does quite a bit of exotic modeling for places like House of Whacks, one of Chicago's premier latex wear (shiny, slinky, kinky) boutiques, and has outfits left over from that.

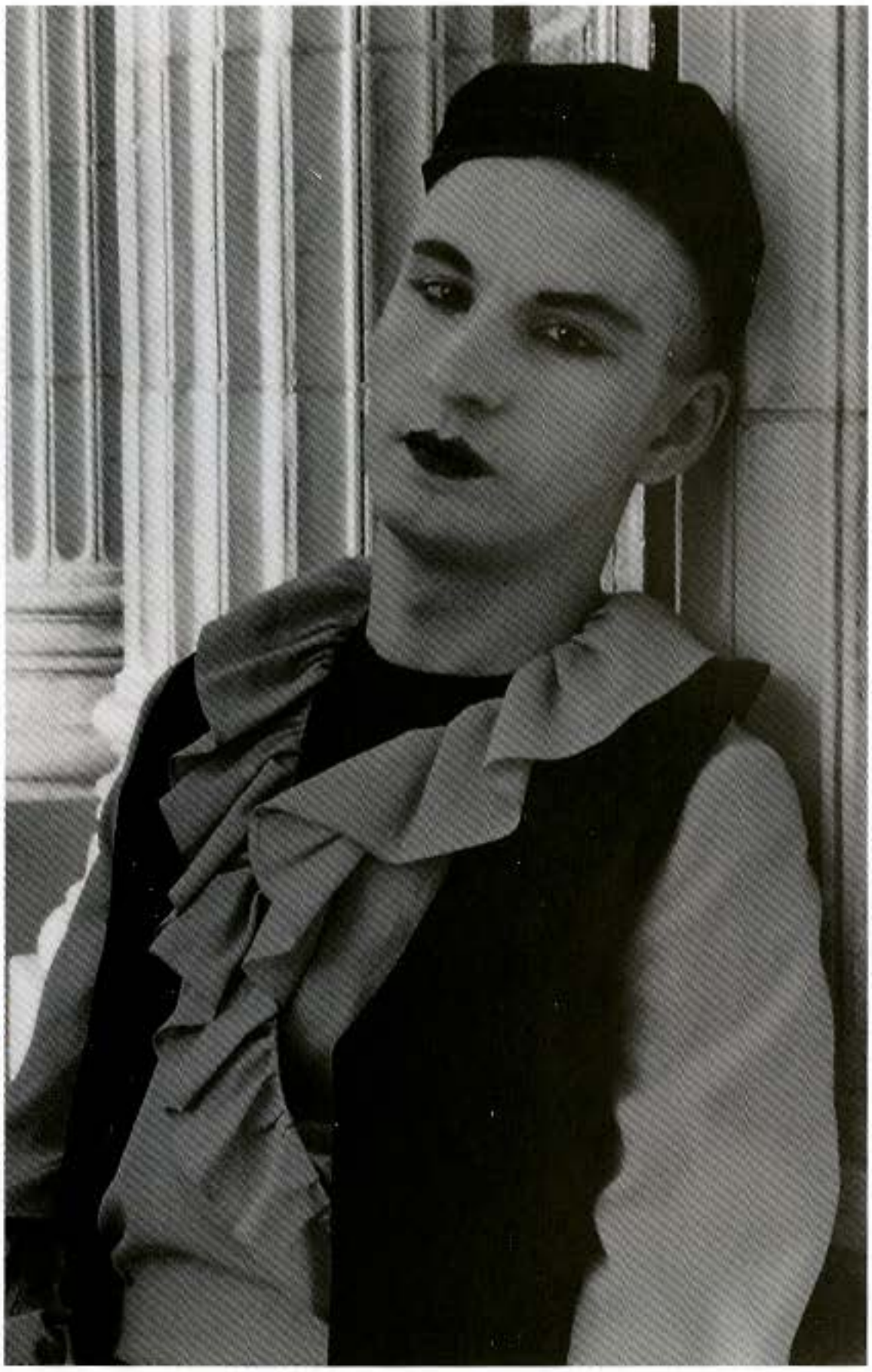
Zoë's one staple accessory is the Barbie doll. He collects them and reveres them. He has punk Barbies, glamour Barbies and all things in between. He often dresses her up to look like him, matching outfits, and carries her along on his adventures. On Barbie's 35th birthday, he and a friend dressed up their Barbies and took them out on Belmont to the clubs for a drink. A local television reporter caught up with them and asked about their Barbie birthday plans. When the reporter expressed concern over Barbie's corruption, Zoë said that she was 35 and plenty old enough to go to a bar. He then pulled out his bondage buddy, a Ken replacement in leather and with an extra large—shall we say, anatomical attachment—whom Zoë claimed to be the man Barbie had finally grown up enough to appreciate. The story made the evening news.

Zoë's fondness for toys is one reason why he decided to work at an all-ages club. He used to spend lots of times at the adult clubs, but was never a drinker or a druggie, so it got boring to watch everyone else indulge while they were looking for that perfect someone to spend the rest of their night with. One time, a friend invited him out and he was not quite up to dealing with everyone and their altered states, so, to keep himself entertained, he took along a bag of toys, little plastic trinkets like they give out at a kid's birthday party. He began to hand them around to people, and found out that it was really a fun and unintimidating way to make contact with the masses. Now, he usually takes a bag of goodies along for his forays into the clubs. Zoë would rather be in a place that encourages good times without pushing alcohol or drugs or irresponsible sex. And he has begun to realize how much he likes to work with young people. He knows that there were things about his own teenage years that were really painful—like being way different from your average parochial school student, being gay, battling eating disorders, suffering from bouts of depression and occasional suicidal tendencies—and is eager to help kids recognize that it's okay to feel strange or sad or alone once in awhile. That there is a light at the end of the tunnel. You do get to grow up, and maybe even still have fun. Like Zoë does.

Berlin is Zoë's favorite adult club. It has been around ever since he first started hitting the clubs. He tries to make it there for special nights, including the Sunday night drag queen show. Club kids and drag queens have a lot in common and often end up in the same place. They like to dress up, show off, make believe. Although Zoë does dress in drag sometimes, he doesn't consider himself a drag queen. He is entirely secure in his sexuality, and has been a strong

supporter of gay rights for a long time. Now and then he does get hassled by other gay men who think that he is doing a disservice to the gay community by being so campy, so girly. But the way Zoë dresses is more about fun than about sex. And he has given up trying to please everyone all the time. "No way is everyone going to like me. I know that now." He has a very complicated theory of life that involves 999 puzzle pieces and how they all fit together to make all the good things and all the bad things of his existence, and how so many of them are interchangeable. It's clear he has thought about it good and long.

"This is my most prized possession," he said as he pulled a leather jacket out of a rainbow tote bag. He had painted its sleeves different colors and painted a bar code on the back—one of those scanner labels they have on all products today. Underneath the bar code he wrote "I am a product of your imagination." A friend of his asked him once what his statement was. What was he trying to say by being who he was? He worked that one over for awhile and came up with the jacket.



His wardrobe is a combination of things. He is a master of pulling things together, mixing and matching, recycling things. "Every pair of boots has had many lives."

"What a stupid question. 'What's your statement?'" He's not about statements. "By saying that I am a product of your imagination. What do you think I am trying to do?" It doesn't really matter what other people think. It's not that he doesn't make statements or look for symbols or poke fun at them—like when they had a Gothic Night at the club and he had a Gothic Bake Sale with Original Sin Cookies and Virgin Mary Cake, "Goths are so gloom and doom, I wanted to have fun!" It's just that he really isn't trying to prove anything. Besides, he has something different to say every week. He is always willing to shake things up. That's how he got the job at Alcatraz in the first place. The club had become a bastion of gang bangers, and the owner wanted to change that. Zoë came in and added some glamour, some drama, some trashy flash. That first night his mohawk was bright yellow, his eyes were heavily penciled in black, and he made a tutu out of yellow police line caution tapes. He wanted people to know that things had changed, that they should enter at their own risk. And if they weren't careful, they might just have a good time. □

designed by Laurie Miller

Kung Fu Flics

kung fu films are alive and kicking

by Janine Marte photographs provided by Chicago's Film Center at the School of the Art Institute

A man, eyes wide and arms raised in a fighter's stance, finds himself trapped in a funhouse—an everchanging maze of sliding walls, trap doors and upside-down rooms. He must use his hands, his feet, his body to battle his way out. Your senses reel as his do, heads spinning in every direction, searching for a way out...

left: *Once Upon a Time in China II (Wong Fei Hong) the 1992 Hong Kong release is an action-packed, historical drama starring the memorable and heroic Jet-Li.*

right: *Jackie Chan stars in the slapstick, kung fu comedy, City Hunter released in 1993, this film, set in modern day China, was a chance for Jackie Chan to show off both his comedic and martial arts skills.*

A shared nightmare? No, the kung fu classic *My Lucky Stars* with Jackie Chan.

Until recently, my only exposure to kung fu movies was watching badly-dubbed 1970s chop socky flics on the late show, and my ex-roommate Melissa. She's a very nice person, just a little off. She woke up for work at 4:30 a.m., literally moments after I came home from my night job. I would drop off to sleep listening to her scream "Hiyah" while standing in front of the TV in her white pajamas practicing karate moves to Bruce Lee kung fu flics like *Fists of Fury*.

I found that the majority of the 1970s "chop socky" flics that I came in contact with to be a better-than-average cure for sleeplessness. It's very tiring to watch a 125-pound man whip his body into a frenzy as he attempts to fight off a mob of very angry bad guys with very large weapons.

My personal favorite from this genre is *Three Supermen in the Jungle*, a 1973 Italian-produced "chop-socky" flic. You get the best of both worlds with this movie—great fight scenes involving kung fu superheros in tights battling Russian spies *and* cannibals and special effects: those strange punching, flipping, kicking noises that characterize kung fu flics (and Batman cartoons)—all dubbed in Italian.

I believed movies like *Three Supermen in the Jungle* and its sequel, *Supermen Against the Orient* where typical of the entire Hong Kong industry. Then I was educated.

In *Film Comment* magazine, Paul Fonoroff wrote that "the single most important caveat for a movie aficionado of Hong Kong films may be this: they can never, ever be understood in isolation." He's right. You must understand the tangled history behind the Hong Kong cinema first, and then come to realize that the Hong Kong cinema and kung fu movies are more than the poorly dubbed, bizarre, unlikely films ("chop socky" films) that tarnished the industry during the 1970s and now appear on *The Son of Svengooli*.

Throughout the 1920s and into the 1950s, movie talent fluctuated between Shanghai and Hong Kong. In 1937, during the Sino-Japanese War, the Shanghai film industry closed down for several months. Actors and directors fled Shanghai, some for Hong Kong and many for cities in China's interior, where higher quality productions now replaced the usual low budget quickies or "seven day wonders".

As the Shanghai movie industry recovered, the studios began actively recruiting talent from the British colony of Hong Kong. Many stars, including box-office favorites Chen Yunshang and Charlie Chan, became famous. But this new success didn't last. In 1945, a second wave of talented actors and directors relocated to Hong Kong—yet another indication of Shanghai's increasingly unstable economy and government.

More than 90 percent of the people in Hong Kong spoke the Chinese dialect Cantonese; therefore Cantonese-dialect movies dominated the cinemas. Mandarin-language films were also being produced in the 1930s, by displaced Shanghai directors, but it was not until the Japanese occupation of the British colony and the banning of all American and British films that Mandarin movies enjoyed popularity.

Production on Cantonese films resumed after VJ Day, and in the post-World War II era they quickly recovered their dominance. Today, these films are fairly easy for curious Westerners to come by for they are distributed throughout Asia and in many American Chinatown cities.

Being the amiable person I am, I shared this information with my sister Lisa, a closet kung fu flic fanatic (she had only recently revealed her obsession to me—I had to ply her with Ben & Jerry's Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Ice Cream first). Unfortunately, I decided to do this while we were checking out her new "Surround Sound" by watching director John Woo's gory gangster picture, *A Better Tomorrow*. "Shut up," she insisted. "This is my favorite part." I ignored her (she had been saying this is her "favorite part" during every rollicking, bloody fight scene for more than an hour). "Did you know..." I had barely

Swordsman II, released in 1992 is both a supernatural thriller and a tangled love story starring Jet Li and Hsing-Hsia (Brigitte Lin) as the Invincible Asia.

begun when a large and not-so-soft couch cushion smacked me in the face.

Which raised the question: "Do you think her behavior was a reflection of, or a reaction to, the violence Woo, and many other Asian directors, portray in their films?" I asked my friend Sean, perhaps intellectualizing a bit too much. "It only gets worse," he warned me ominously. "Come to my dad's house on a Wednesday night. And be afraid. Be very afraid."

I arrived at the Conner homestead a few minutes after 7:30 on a Wednesday night, as directed. I had been there before, but the atmosphere seemed changed. "The countdown begins in less than ten minutes," Sean nervously greeted me at the door. "You better get downstairs. You won't be allowed in or out of there until after it's all over." He prodded my back, pushing me down the short flight of stairs in front of him.

An alarm bell went off in my head when I caught my first glimpse of his father. I tried to resist—my heels dug into the carpeted stairs and my arms shot out to either side, bracing me between the walls. My abrupt stop sent Sean careening into me, propelling me into the living room and into a disjointed, nightmarish evening of watching David Carradine make a fool of himself on *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues*.

Mr. Conner hadn't even noticed the scene on the stairs. He sat three feet from the television screen, leaning forward in his La-Z-Boy, wearing a black silk bathrobe emblazoned with a large fire-breathing dragon and black socks pulled up to mid-calf. And—this is my favorite part—his hands were busy digging fortune cookies out of a box on his lap. I was afraid, very afraid. Mr. Conner reminded me of my ex-roommate, Melissa.

"Janine," he grunted in my direction.

"Hey, Mr. Conner. How's it goin'?" I asked, genuinely concerned. He was usually so *normal*.

"Good, good. *Kung Fu* comes on soon. Got 'em all on tape. Good show. Realistic."

Sure thing, big guy.

Sean and I sat on the couch immediately to the right of his father. We closely monitored his behavior, noting the intense look of concentration on his face as Caine used his vast wisdom and dexterous body to manipulate his enemies into Jell-O during the numerous fight scenes, and the barely perceptible movement of Mr. Conner's hands as he imitated Caine's kung fu prowess.

If I so much as blinked during the show, Mr. Conner's head whipped in my direction (like Linda Blair's in *The Exorcist*) and he would glare like he wanted to perform one of Caine's hurtful sleeper holds on me. "Shah," he would spit. (As if he could really hear my eyelids flapping.)

When the show ended, Sean and I both visibly relaxed. "That Caine," Mr. Conner chuckled, shaking his head from side to side.

"Mr. Conner?" I asked, testing the proverbial water to see if the spell had passed.

"Yeah?" he answered, rubbing his face and yawning like a man who had recently awakened from a trance. He even seemed a bit embarrassed by his attire.

"What, exactly, makes you watch this show?" I questioned.

He shrugged and sat silently for a moment.

"I like kung fu. There's something...noble about it. Ever notice that the good guy can be up against, like, twenty bad guys, but they won't all attack him at once? They actu-

ally wait their turn. *That's* respect." (Actually, *that's* wu xi pian, the Chinese code of martial chivalry and tradition.)

Mr. Conner not only appreciates the nobility of American-made kung fu shows, but the Hong Kong classics as well.

"Anybody who's a real fan has seen [Jackie Chan's] *Police Story 1, 2 and 3*," he claimed.

So I watched *Police Story, Police Story 2* and *Police Story 3: Supercop*. He was right.

In *Police Story*, Jackie Chan's character, Detective Chan Ka Kui, attempts to stop a bus load of criminals in one of the most mind boggling and spectacular chase scenes I have ever watched. He jumps, kicks, twirls, punches, and stumbles through a Hong Kong shanty town, escapes being crushed by the wheels of his own car and avoids tumbling over a cliff, only to grab an umbrella from a passing motorist, attach the handle to the bumper and uses his powerful arms to drag his body up the umbrella shaft and on to the back of the bus where he tosses criminals off—all while avoiding passing traffic, gunfire and death.

Unlike most action movies, he is actually out of breath when the scene is completed. Jackie Chan does not use a stunt double because he prefers to do his stunts himself—on more than one occasion Chan, as well as other cast members, have been injured, and even hospitalized, because of dangerous stunts preformed on his sets.

According to *Oriental Cinema Magazine*, the outtakes from *Police Story* include footage of "Jackie being carried off the set, Jackie being revived and Jackie being bandaged."

Police Story 2 and *Police Story 3: Supercop* also have fantastic action scenes that demonstrate Chan's remarkable acrobatic talent, all while illustrating the lure of Hong Kong cinema.

Whatever Mr. Conner's reasons for watching, or any other kung fu flic fan's may be, these movies have not only survived, but have flourished. Since 1963, more than 200 kung fu films are produced in Hong Kong yearly. Because of the large number of movies produced each year, a successful one will only play the theaters for two or three weeks, whereas a flop will only survive two or three days.

Many of these movies, both successes and flops, make it to American shores. These authentic kung fu movies paved the way for American-made martial arts movies and brought fame to stars like Jean-Claude Van Damme, Chuck Norris, Don "The Dragon" Wilson and Steven Segal.

Once the kung fu movies make it to American shores, the good ones will play in their original Cantonese, with English subtitles, at film festivals art houses and at Chinatown theaters like Los Angeles' Pagoda, Chicago's Film Center at the Art Institute, New York's the Music Palace and San Francisco's the Great Star. The bad ones, like the cult film *Thundering Mantis*, are poorly dubbed in English and are sold illegally.

However these movies are distributed, there are thousands of people nationwide, including this convert, who will watch them. □

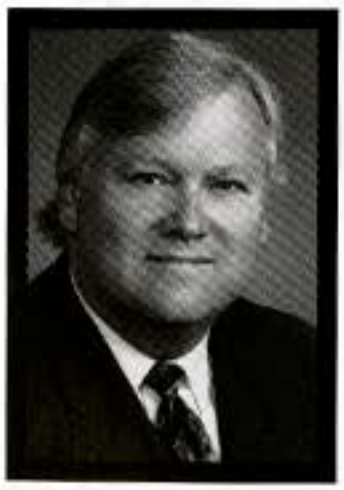
Jackie Chan is shown here playing around with May, his co-star and sidekick, in City Hunter. May and Chan are often paired together in other movies.

designed by Vanessa Villarreal

Three Chicago Architects

chatting with Smith, Goldberg, and Tigerman

by Christina Perry



left: *Adrian Smith*

middle: *William McFetridge, Bertrand Goldberg and Chris Swibel looking at a model of Marina City.*

right: *Stanley Tigerman and, partner, Margret McCurry.*

My assignment was to meet with well-known Chicago architects to talk about their favorite building in the city. However, I had no idea, at the outset, how difficult these "Master Builder" types could be. Since the question seemed so simple, straightforward, and unassuming, I was not prepared when neither Adrian Smith, Betrand Goldberg or Stanley Tigerman would answer it. What I learned was that Chicago architects are anything but simple, straightforward and unassuming.

My first interview was with Adrian Smith a partner and CEO of the internationally acclaimed Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (SOM). When the elevator doors opened on the 10th floor of the company's Michigan Avenue office, I had the feeling of being inside a hot air balloon. I walked to the rail and looked down to the ninth floor. I saw some of the firm's almost 200 employees working in adjoining cubicles. I was inside a giant beehive, but despite all the open space and activity I couldn't hear so much as a buzz.

I approached the receptionists, twin gargoyles of corporate culture. They narrowed their eyes at me and looked me up and down. I told them I had a 2:15p.m. appointment with Adrian Smith.

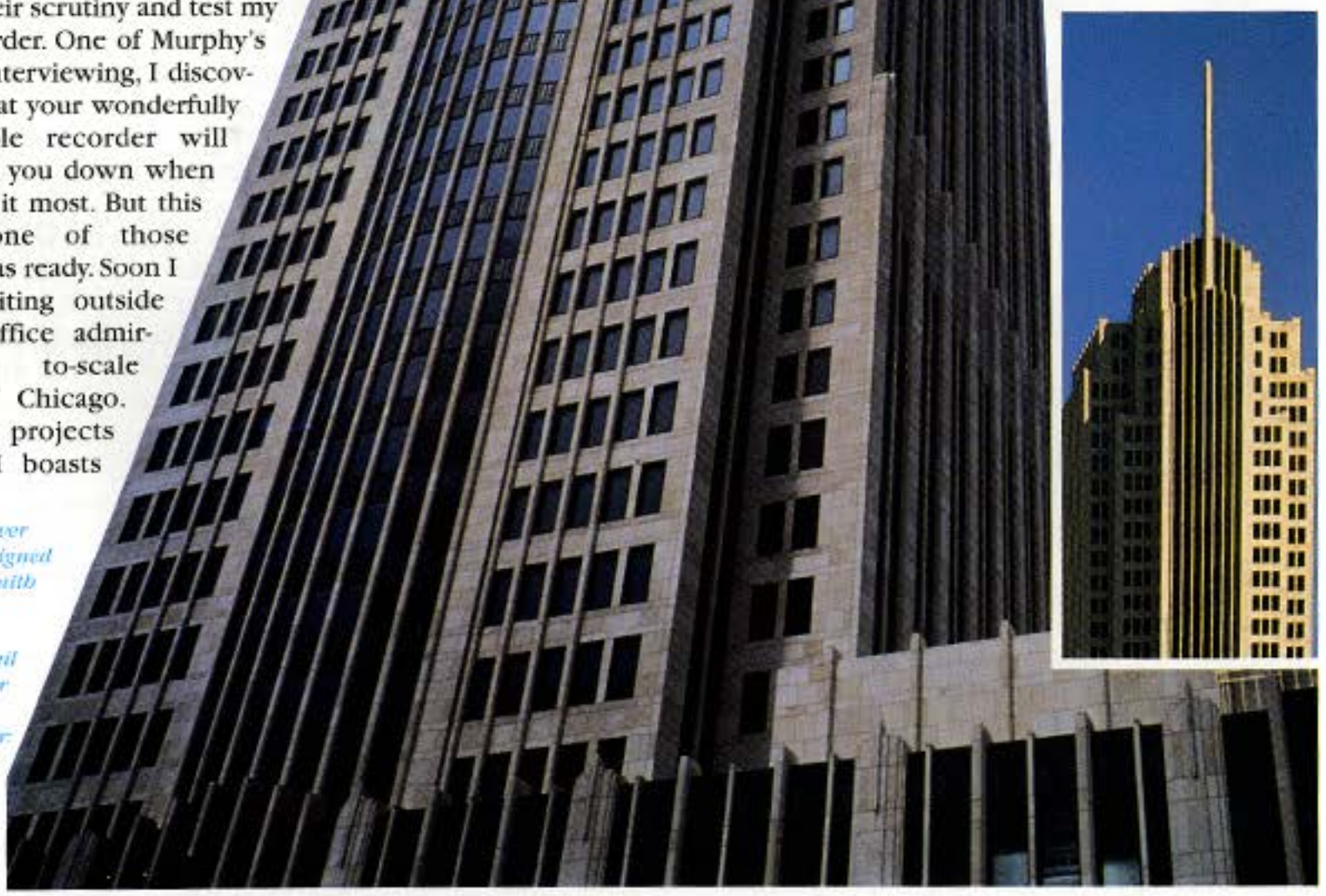
"You're early, he's not back from lunch yet."

I ducked into the bathroom to escape their scrutiny and test my tape recorder. One of Murphy's Laws of interviewing, I discovered, is that your wonderfully dependable recorder will always let you down when you need it most. But this wasn't one of those times. I was ready. Soon I stood waiting outside Smith's office admiring the to-scale model of Chicago. The 48 projects that SOM boasts of in the downtown area include such impressive landmarks as the John Hancock Building and the Sears Tower. In the model, all of SOM's buildings are the color of cooked oatmeal, just barely discernible from the rest of the buildings which are beige. I was straining to tell them apart when Smith emerged.

He led the way into a conference room and offered me coffee. I accepted. His slight grimace told me that this was my first mistake. My second was relying on my tape player which was in fast forward mode when I pulled it from my bag. My third was forgetting to tell Smith that I was a student, not a journalist. I should have known from my research that Smith would be wary of journalists. The company had received some pretty noxious coverage in the past few years. Smith's schoolboy appearance, complete with double chins and baby fine hair, made it difficult to believe that he is 50-years old. Difficult, that is, until he said to me from several feet away across the long conference table.

"Now what's this all about again?"

Did he have a favorite building in Chicago and why? The question sounded ridiculous coming out of my mouth.



left: NBC Tower Building designed by Adrian Smith of SOM.

far left: detail of NBC Tower building. photographer: Timothy Hurley.

Smith responded with a series of suspicious questions. I was about to say, "Maybe we should just forget the whole thing," when he said, "Let me ask you this. I have a specific philosophy of architecture, and each of the buildings that I've done in the city relates and responds to that philosophy. Each one also has a relative degree of success in achieving that philosophy. What if I talk about that philosophy and give you as examples certain pieces of those buildings?"

"That would be wonderful," I blurted. I wasn't sure if it would be but I didn't have a back-up plan and I had to get him talking about something.

"My philosophy," Smith began, "is one of contextualism where I believe...that buildings should be designed to fit into the fabric of the period. To be an addition to the existing fabric that we're dealing with, and to expand on that fabric with an additive approach—each structure building upon the city that was traditionally there. My particular bent on this philosophy of contextualism is to be sympathetic with the existing fabric and, in most cases, to try to add onto that fabric. Almost like sewing in a piece of a quilt or a tapestry. I think there are instances where that tapestry can have certain exceptions to the fabric—to have sort of bright idiosyncratic spots which, if done in the right places, can enrich the overall tapestry. But for the most part we're building that tapestry to be a cohesive network in the whole. If you do too many special or idiosyncratic elements within that tapestry, the tapestry is then going to become, sort of, disconcerted—a non-compositional piece. And the whole sense of the tapestry will become eroded until you can't quite tell what it is.

"A few Chicago buildings that I've designed, I feel, have fit into that general approach in a strong way would be buildings such as the NBC Tower, AT&T and two-twenty-five West Washington. All of these buildings, in a way, disappear from view when you're looking at the total city. They become part of the sense of stone color that the city, as a whole, contains. Where I think each has a departure from what the traditional city has been is in relationship to the ground floor plans. Particularly a building like AT&T which has a thru-block arcade, a thru-block lobby, where you can walk in from Monroe Street and walk all the way through to Adams. It's an entirely public interior street done with richly detailed marbles and woods. That's probably the most successful of the arcaded buildings in the city."

Smith talked further about his philosophy of contextualism using, as further examples, the AT&T building, 222 LaSalle, and the second floor renovation at the Art Institute.

"So, as opposed to some other architects in the city, I like to pursue architecture in a quiet way rather than an overtly shouting Jetson-type way," Smith concluded with a sudden burst of laughter, which seemed to be as much of a relief for him as it was for me. It wasn't until later that I got the joke. Smith knew I would be interviewing Bertrand Goldberg of Bertrand Goldberg Associates and was referring, I imagine, to his Marina Towers, which look like giant salt and pepper shakers among all the square and rectangular boxes in SOM's model.

When I relayed this to Goldberg in the den of his Gold Coast home, he laughed softly, as he did often throughout the interview. There is nothing about Bertrand Goldberg that comes across in an "overtly shouting, Jetson-type way." He is a slight, wrinkled man with brilliant eyes who looks like he *lives* in brown tweed. He will turn 82 this year. I had been speaking with Goldberg daily for almost a week and, by the time we met. I felt like he was an old friend. Goldberg confirmed this by sitting a few feet away from me and asking me questions about myself as I struggled to revive my half-frozen tape recorder.

"My background, in a sense, requires me to explain myself [in regard to] architecture," Goldberg began. "When I was learning architecture at Harvard, which was in nineteen-hundred-and-thirty-one and nineteen-hundred-and-thirty-two, architecture was taught on the principles of L'Ecole Des Beaux Arts in Paris. But, when I went to the Bauhaus, I discovered that architecture was really a sociological art and that it was part of the development of society. It either reflected society or helped to shape society. Therefore my buildings, primarily residences, first quite subconsciously, I suppose, reflected the society that I was working for.

"Raymond Hilliard Housing is housing for the poor. I read a lot of criticism about the crime that is committed in housing for the poor. But I don't read very much, in fact, I read nothing of the crime at Raymond Hilliard, simply because I don't think there is any—well not certainly not very much crime—just normal—you might say normal—standard crime. I think there is message in this phenomenon. That, within the architecture at Raymond Hilliard, people cared when they built it. They didn't just store old people there. We also succeeded in forming communities there that successfully take care of themselves and don't need uniformed police to maintain law and order."

I asked Goldberg how the space facilitated this phenomenon of reduced crime.

"We shape the spaces very much the way the Southwest Indians used to build their mesas. They didn't have posts and beams and straight lines. They figured out how people would live. Where the grain would be kept, where people would sleep, where people would cook, where people would mingle with other people, and they just built shelter around those areas. That's literally what we did at Raymond Hilliard. There are no posts and no beams. The engineering design was a new one to some extent—a radical procedure which worked."

I asked if anyone tried to interfere with Raymond Hilliard.

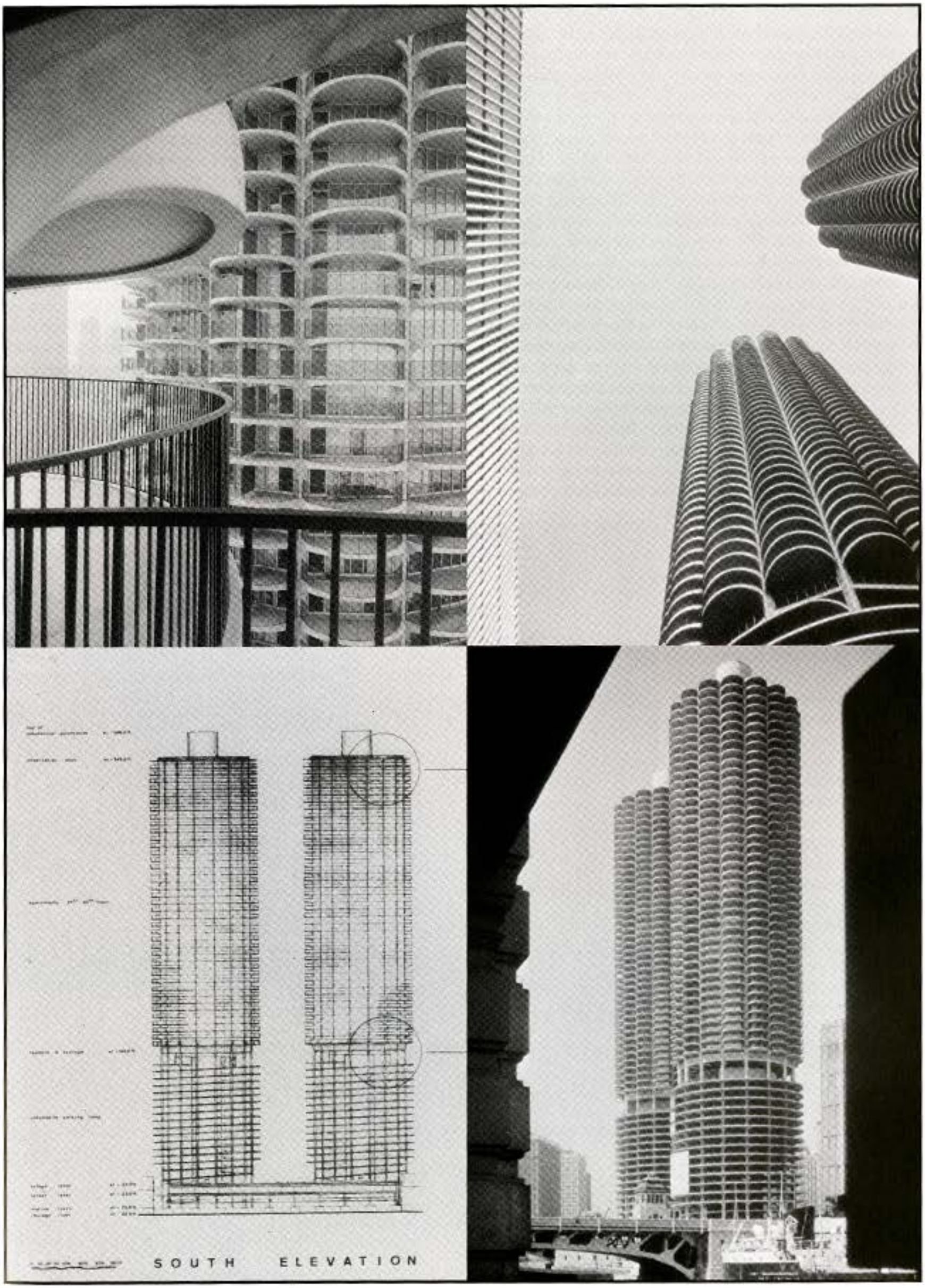
"The federal government objected to the arrangements we had designed and so they invited me to Washington to talk to them about it. They showed me photographs of elderly people sitting around waiting to die, hands folded in

top left: side by side perspective—from one tower to the other

top right: ground/up perspective, Marina Towers

bottom left: sketch of south elevation of Marina Towers designed by Bertrand Goldberg

bottom right: completed Marina Towers, 1967


SOUTH ELEVATION

their laps—*endlessly*—always hands folded in their laps. Some playing pool. Some knitting. But everybody just waiting. And they said, 'You see, *this* is the poor. What you did is too good for the poor'. To which I responded, that that was what we were trying to provide, something that was *too good for the poor* to give them the feeling that we are dedicated to [changing] their lives.

"[The federal government] hired two architects with social interests, both of them with European backgrounds. They both agreed that this was a very interesting layout *but* that this was proper for artists, not for the poor. On the other hand, friends of mine who came to look at Raymond Hilliard, as it was near completion said, 'Why can't you build something this interesting and this wonderful to live in on Lake Shore Drive? Why do you have to build it for the poor?' So you have a struggle, whenever you bring new designs, for acceptance, public acceptance, in the marketplace. And it isn't easy to come by. People are afraid of change. They have no experience with change. A building is a very big thing. An investment. It's going to be there until you wreck it, as they are now doing with the boxes facing the lakefront around forty-first and forty-second street—boxes for the poor."

As he spoke, Goldberg's hands were anything but folded in his lap. He moved them continuously as he spoke, almost as though "we" referred to himself and his invisible puppets. My interview with Goldberg was twice as long as my interview with Smith and twice as interesting. He spanned time from his earliest projects with prefabricated housing in the 1940s all the way to his recent educational facilities for Wright College.

Stanley Tigerman of Tigerman McCurry, in which he and his wife, Margaret McCurry, are partners, had different opinions—lots of them. According to him, the architects I interviewed were "bullshit architects talking about bullshit buildings. See if you have the cajónes to print that." Tigerman leaned down and spoke directly into my tape recorder which was *finally* operating without a hitch.

"What if I didn't want to talk about a building? What if I wanted to talk about ARCHEWORKS, this new school I'm doing?"

I let Tigerman convince me, because he's the kind of guy who needs to feel he's convincing you. The result was, I thought, my best interview yet. Half of it was a series of digressions which were more interesting than Tigerman's primary subject. This is not to say that ARCHEWORKS, the design school founded by Tigerman and interior designer Eva Maddox is not interesting. *It is.*

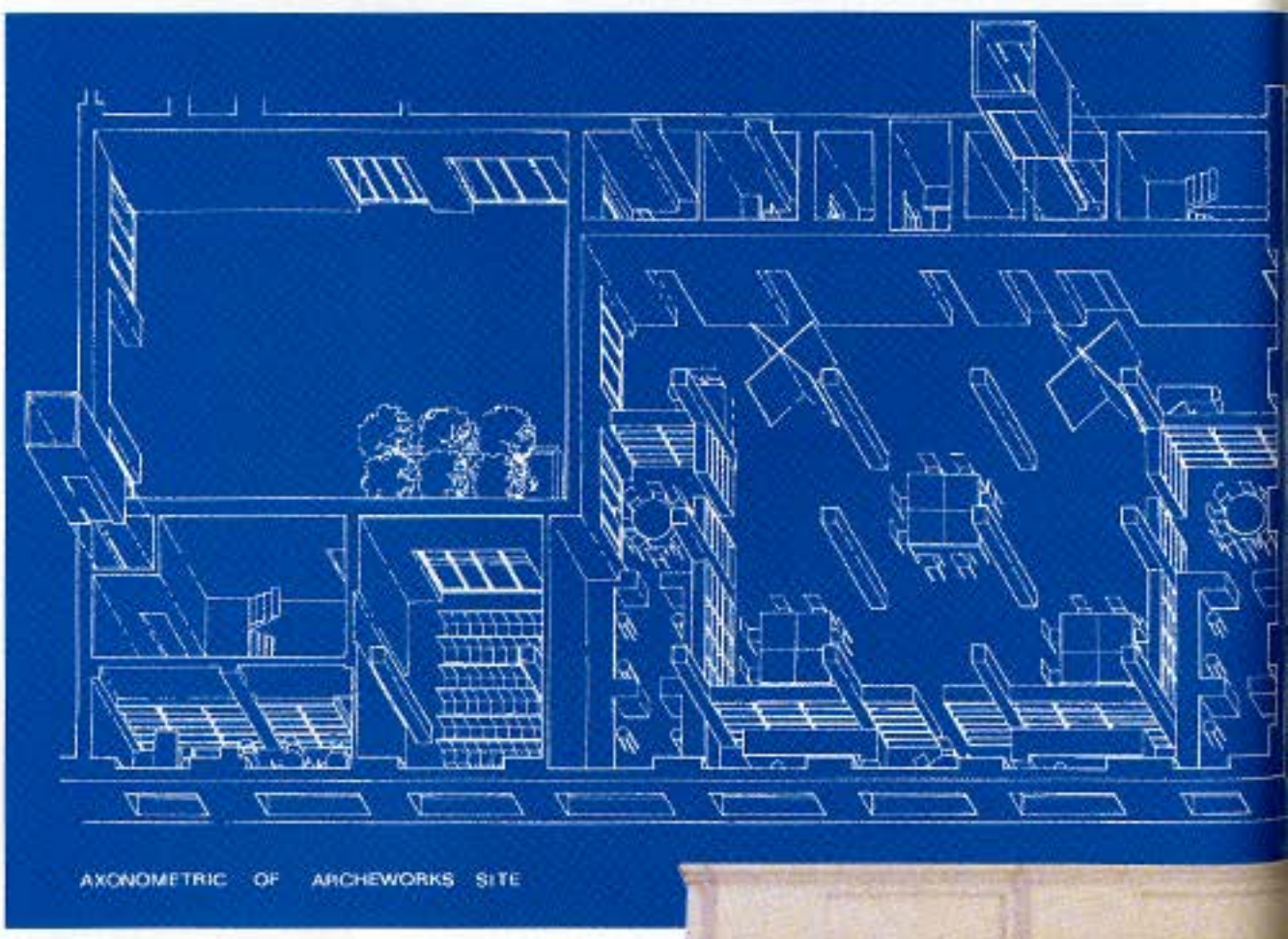
ARCHEWORKS is a "do-tank," according to Tigerman, which transcends traditional education. Experienced facilitators, such as Tigerman and Maddox, form interns into multi-disciplinary teams which not only develop, but also implement, designs. ARCHEWORKS works for and with charitable foundations, tackling such difficult problems as "homelessness, affordable housing, early learning, gerontological issues, issues of the disabled, sustainable environments and stuff like that," said Tigerman proudly.

But ARCHEWORKS isn't nearly as interesting as Tigerman, a self-professed "bullshitter" who describes himself as "a short, fat, nebbishy, Jewish guy." Not to mention that he wears glasses, is 64 years old, loves to sit in his River North office and yell for his assistants, receives a steady string of phone calls, still goes to lunch with his friends from kindergarten and has an impressive number of awards and publications.

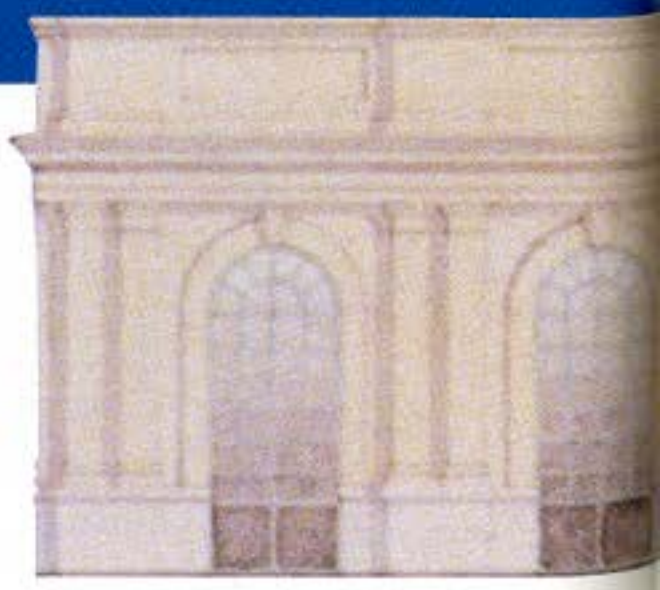
Ladies and gentlemen, I give you my favorite Stanley Tigerman digressions:

"I'm screwed. Put that (tape player) on hold."

"I am a native Chicagoan. It's my town. I love it."



AXONOMETRIC OF ARCHEWORKS SITE



above: interior floor plan of ARCHEWORKS, created by Stanley Tigerman and Eva Maddox.

right: sketch of the Hard Rock Cafe, designed by Stanley Tigerman

"I know Boston. I flunked out of MIT. But the real reason was, I wasn't smart enough. It was too hard."

"Bitter, even as we speak. A fabulous chip on my shoulder. It's the asymmetry of my body. I'm weighted down by my *hatred* of MIT."

"No, Yale was a piece of cake."

"It's true. You can tell that I don't entirely tell the truth. Hyperbole and exaggeration, they're the tools of a writer. You understand these things, but there's obviously some truth in however magnificent the lie is."

"But this one is totally, utterly true. My parents were very poor. My grandmother ran a boardinghouse so we lived in the boardinghouse. My grandfather—I'm Jewish—was a Talmudic scholar, so he never worked. My grandmother was the chef at The Belden Stratford Hotel. My mother was the strong one. My father was weak. She always wanted money because we never had it. Children always rebel against their parents at some level. My rebellion was against my mother—this is what I tell my shrink. It's all true. And so I rebelled against becoming successful. I didn't want to make money."

"In nineteen hundred and forty-two, when I was twelve years old, I read a book just published, by someone called Ayn Rand. It was called *The Fountainhead* and it was about heroism and it was against the status quo and it was against self-serving and it was against success in that sense. Obviously, I was too young to realize she was a fascist, etcetera."

"As the years passed, and eighteen years later I was thirty-years-old—or whatever I was—and I was at the Masters Program at Yale, Ayn Rand was giving a colloquia at the law school. So I got my buddies and said, 'Hey, we gotta go.' Afterwards, like a shmuck, I went up to her and said, 'Ms. Rand I understand what you're talking about, I'm in the Graduate Architecture School at Yale here and I just wanted to introduce myself and to thank you because by reading your book I became an architect.' She looked at me in that typical, arrogant, horrible way that New Yorkers have of looking you up and down and said, 'So what?'"

"So I've never really become a success, say, next to Adrian Smith. Do you know what my salary was this year from this place? This place! What would you guess? Try zero. Try zero!"

"Is IQ part of architecture? No. You could never do architecture because writers are too smart, they have a higher IQ. Actually, you think I'm bullshitting, but I'm not. It's true. It comes from talent, raw talent out the end of the fingers."

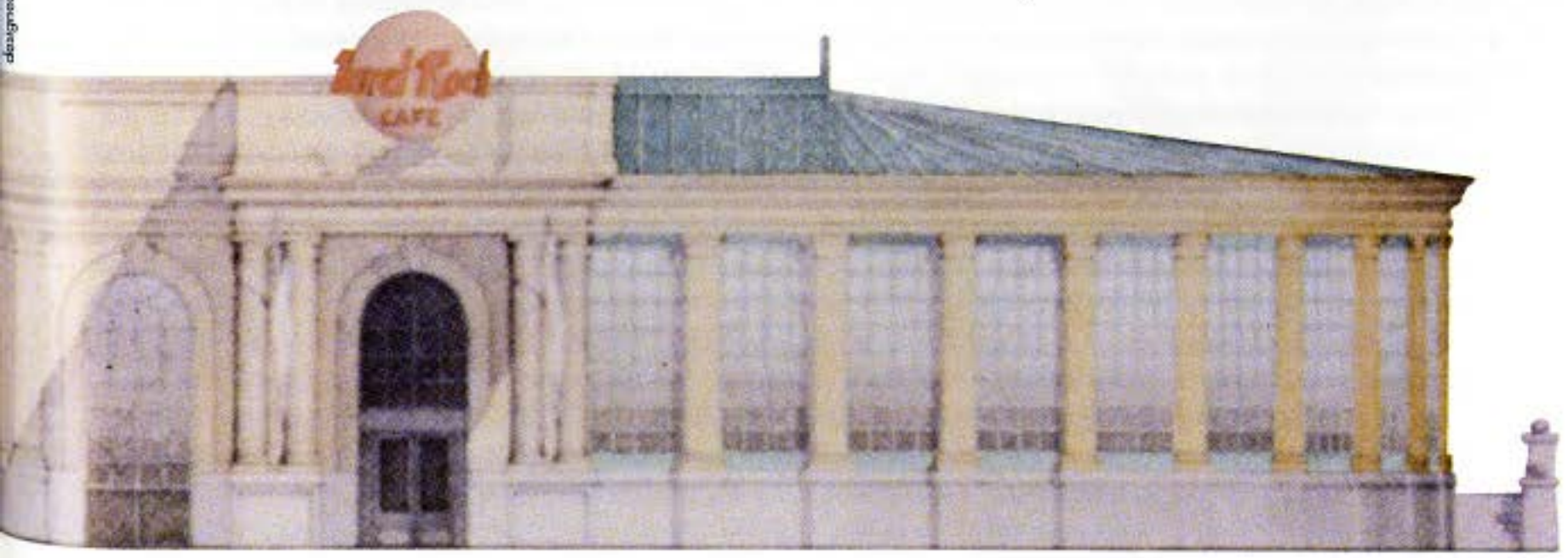
"It's not what's new under the sun—and maybe you have this to learn—it's the trying to find something. That's the key. *That's* the key. It's the fact that you try or you don't try."

"When I was young, I designed a tetrahedral idea project for the building over expressways. It was very famous in the middle sixties, called *Instant City*. It was published everywhere and I thought, 'Damn, I finally created something new.' I was thirty-five-years-old. And then, I saw later, that, in Germany, some goddamn person had done something very similar. Had I seen it? No. Is there anything new under the sun? Probably not. But it's trying to find it that's really important because if you don't try to find it you don't become a success—you clip coupons and you're dead before your time."

"New is fabulous, when you're young you're spontaneous. When you're old, you're refined and sophisticated. It's very hard, almost impossible, to find refinement and sophistication in the young. It's damn near impossible to find absolute spontaneity in the old—I'm trying to remain young, that's why I teach. That's why I started this new school. That's why we've never hired anybody in this office other than entry level. They're all just out of graduate programs—straight. This is not a retirement home. So what is there about modernism? Because that's the obligation of your craft. If they didn't want you to *find* something they just would've hired a fucking architectural preservationist."

"Your life will be made better by your trying and your writing will be made better because it will show a yearning to break out. Even if you're not capable of breaking out. Say you're just not capable, or say you just can't find it, whatever *it* is, or you just can't find something new at all. The writing will show that—that you're trying, you know that as well as I do. Nobody [who] does réportage becomes a classic. It's in the trying. You gotta try as a writer. You gotta try as an architect. Did I ever come up with anything new? No. Did I try? Yes. Do I still try? Yes. Do I expect to? I don't know—maybe." □

designed by Georgina Panko



MAKING *it's not easy but* it in chicago *hundreds keep trying* theater

by Patti Frey

Chicago theater is raw and unconcerned with status. It is young and foolish, fighting to survive.
—Chicago actor Bradford Farwell

Welcome to the world of Chicago theater, where it is full of bright lights, excitement, frustration and fury. It is stimulating and provocative. The inhabitants here love what they do with a passion that nourishes them and allows them to exist under primitive conditions. They work frequently for no compensation other than the excitement of participating in the performance and the ever elusive prospect of fame and fortune.

Chicago actors are a dedicated breed. They pour their hearts and souls into their craft in the hopes of realizing their goals. While New York and Los Angeles have always been known as the traditional actors' towns, Chicago has recently become a serious alternative for those who wish to make a living by pursuing their dreams of being on stage.

From Steppenwolf Theatre to Second City, Chicago theater experienced a renaissance during the late 70s and early 80s. After a period of stagnation, it was reborn in the late 80s and suddenly found itself struggling to find an identity right for its 90s audience. Today, there are more than 100 theaters in the Windy City, representing a wide range of styles and sensibilities.

"As Chicago has become recognized in recent years as a legitimate theater town, some of the blood and guts of the old Steppenwolf Theatre—the hard-hitting, life-on-the-edge, foaming-at-the-mouth pathos drama, has yielded itself to the demands of more provincial audiences," observed actor Tom Gottlieb, a member of the Dolphinback Theatre group in Chicago.

Certainly, Steppenwolf Theatre is known throughout contemporary America for the legion of dramatic actors it has produced: John Malkovich, Laurie Metcalf, John Mahoney and Glenne Headly, all of whom went on to gain fame nationally. But it has been hard for Steppenwolf to live up to its intense, avant-garde reputation.

Andrew Leman, a professional actor in Chicago for the past three years, views Chicago theater as "underattended—struggling with its own reputation. I see it as both blessed and cursed by the legacy of Steppenwolf, which is, simultaneously, the inspiration for small theater companies throughout the city. It is energetic and enthusiastic."

Reminiscing, Leman recalled, "I remember when I was cast in *Your Home in the West* at Steppenwolf, just a couple of months after I moved to Chicago. I will never forget riding my bike home after my first day of rehearsal. I had just met Rondi Reed, Estelle Parsons, Ted Levine, Tom Irwin and a bunch of other amazing people. It was four in the after-

noon, I was done with work for the day and the sun was shining. I was feeling wonderful, thinking about the rehearsals to come and riding my bike in utter disbelief at my incredible good fortune. Halsted Street seemed to be paved with gold—every pot hole and speed bump, a fluffy cloud."

Along with Steppenwolf, Second City has also attracted more and more actors to Chicago through its well-known training programs. The first in its genre, this famous Chicago improvisational group has witnessed and nurtured talents such as Jim and John Belushi, Shelley Long, Elaine May and Dan Aykroyd.

"My initial reason for coming to Chicago was to train with Second City," said Gonzo Schexnayder, a newcomer to the Chicago acting community. "It has been everything I ever expected and beyond. Even if I never make it on the Second City stages, having trained there is satisfaction enough."

With the amount of theater that is produced in Chicago, it would be difficult for a theatergoer to be able to see it all. "I've seen some truly marvelous stuff since I've been here," continued Schexnayder. "I try to stretch my imagination when I see theater. I like to see different takes on the same types of things and Chicago has an abundance of it all.

"One of the first shows I saw in Chicago was *Cannibal Cheerleaders on Crack*. It may not have been one of the best shows I've seen, but it certainly was one of the strangest. What that did for me was reinforce my ideas on how great the possibilities can be. I love the diversity and the openness to new ideas in Chicago theater as well as the entrepreneurial spirit of the acting community. A lot of the shows I have seen in Chicago are produced by theater companies anywhere—and anyway—they can. In reality, you don't need a big budget or have to know that there will be a big audience, you just have to perform. And that's what stuck in my mind when I saw *Cannibal Cheerleaders on Crack*. This was a show with a political/social viewpoint that someone felt strong enough to write and to produce, so they did. While this can be done anywhere, I think it's even more evident in Chicago."

"Good theater in Chicago is about people," said Jeffrey Lieber, an experienced Chicago actor as well as a playwright. "Two people standing across a stage from each other trying to get something, or give something, or tell something or show something and using all their faculties to do so. Bad theater is about falling chandeliers and million dollar sets and performances that come out of the desire to be seen and loved, instead of the desire to be heard."

"The most memorable productions in Chicago are those who take unique risks," added Gottlieb. "These shows don't strive to be different; rather, they strive to make us think and feel in a way that perhaps we haven't before."

Chicago has a style and flavor of its own and with it has come a tight knit acting community. "The talent pool in Chicago is tremendous," noted actor Jason Singer, currently on tour as Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls*. Having graduated from Northwestern University in 1982, Singer has spent more than 10 years pursuing his career in Chicago.

Chicago has recently become a serious alternative for those who wish to make a living by pursuing their dreams of being on stage

"I remember doing *Galieo* at the Goodman Theatre in 1987," continued Singer. "It was my second show out of school and I was on top of the world. Bob Falls was directing and Brian Dennehy was playing the lead. There was no competition, just good, hard work and fun. It was an unbelievable experience."

The smallness of the community, as opposed to the east or west coasts, has contributed to the uniqueness of Chicago. "I spent two years in Los Angeles that felt like twenty. Chicago is different. We all know one another, which amazes New York and Los Angeles actors," said Singer. "And we all know what we want to work on. In Los Angeles, you take what you can get. This is also true in Chicago, but you downplay it because you really try to focus on what you want to do.

"In Los Angeles, everyone and their extended family call themselves actors, but very few of them really know about creating a character. In New York, every actor is a waiter and they may know how to create a character, but they don't understand the business. Actors in Chicago are well-trained, charismatic and very knowledgeable about the business of acting."

Chicago actors are also very versatile and able to assume many roles in the theater. Shawn Simons attended the Chicago Academy of Performing Arts, studied theater at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and then went on to study in New York at Circle in the Square. She returned to Chicago to pursue acting and co-founded her own theater group a year ago. "People do everything here. Unlike New York, where you are an actor or a writer or a director or an agent, in Chicago, actors tend to wear many hats."

Although there is no typical Chicago actor within the community, there is a "Chicago style" that early Chicago theater is often credited with creating. As Edwin Wald, an actor/director/producer in Chicago said, "I've seen patterns of who people are and what the pool is like. It seems to be very diverse. There seems to be a Chicago actor type that works more often. It's difficult to define. It's not a physical type. They are actors who have quite a bit of practical experience, but not a lot of technical experience. Maybe it's that they're raw. Not necessarily untrained, but they have an edge."

Training can be a big part of an actor's career but, unlike medical or law school, the curriculum is uncertain and the job prospects can be almost unbearable. In this field, an actor doesn't advance on merit alone, but must concentrate on his/her career as if it were a business—a business that needs constant updating and improving.

Actors are constantly improving their craft by, not only, gaining the experience they need, but also by educating themselves. On occasion, they take classes, in addition to their on-the-stage training, in order to brush up their skills or to learn new ones. Schexnayder, in addition to his training at Second City, is taking on-camera classes and is getting his voice-over tape ready. Gottlieb has taken scene study, improvisation and audition classes.

"Acting takes a lot of serious introspection. It's a constant job of redefining who I am as an actor," said Singer. "You have to constantly change who you are in the eyes of those who hire you. Keep it fresh and when you do get the job, be a professional.

"In Chicago, it's who you know because you've worked with them at some point and have made a good impression or enjoyed working together or even became friends," continued Singer. "I remember a time when I was working on a commercial as a voiceless player who supported the lead. I told a lot of jokes in between takes and developed a real rapport with everyone as a regular guy. That supporting role turned into a featured role in the next spot and I now have a regular spot with them twice a year. You don't often see it work that way anywhere but in Chicago."

As Chicago has become recognized in recent years as a legitimate theater town, some of the blood and guts of the old Steppenwolf Theatre—the hard-hitting, life-on-the-edge, foaming-at-the-mouth pathos drama, has yielded itself to the demands of more provincial audiences

With tough competition in a small theater city like Chicago, it is easy for an actor to get discouraged after eating rejection for lunch time after time. "If you're true to yourself and remain committed to your dream and remember that not getting the part had little to do with your talent and more to do with what the producer wants, then you can do no wrong," stated Schexnayder.

Chicago has attracted actors from all over the country because of the opportunities it allows to get on stage and gain valuable experience. And experience can be the foremost key when it comes to acting, along with talent, study and a little bit of luck. "An actor can graduate from college, come to Chicago and in three years build a resumé that is perfectly decent as far as a variety of productions," explained Wald, "And with it, they can go on to New York or Los Angeles."

Family can be an important consideration for the young actor. Maurissa Afanador graduated from Northwestern University in theater and chose to stay close to her family residing in Indiana, but that's not the only reason. "The biggest advantage of being in Chicago, besides my family and my friends being here, is the amount of opportunities for a young actor to gain experience."

"I've heard countless stories of how some actors, who are doing okay here, are so eager to go on to Los Angeles or New York thinking that's the place to be. They end up coming back within a year," continued Afanador. "There is real mean competition on the coasts. Make it or break it, as they say.

"There's nothing really driving me to the coasts. I'll go there when there is something waiting for me or I am encouraged by someone I respect to go, but for now, Chicago is my home," said Afanador.

Many actors have started their careers in Chicago and then have gone on to other areas of the country to seek out their dreams. "It's been said that Chicago is like a vacuum pump," explained Wald. "It sucks people in the bot-

tom, they stay for a while and then it spits them out to the coasts." Times are changing. Chicago now provides a draw for actors to not only start their careers here, but continue them as well.

Although it is not as common for a young actor to stay in Chicago for any real length of time, there is a venue for the actor who wants to stay away from the "rat race" that is so often associated with the coasts. "It is not unusual for a young actor to stay three or four years and then move on to New York or Los Angeles. For me, I would like to live in a place where the quality of life is a little higher," said Wald. "This city provides something new for the experienced actor. New York or Los Angeles takes a certain mentality—you have to play their games. Chicago doesn't really have a game; you're able to work on almost anyone's terms."

There is always a chance to produce one's own work. Wald, along with his partner, started Razor's Edge, a non-Equity [non-union] company. "There is no other place that an individual can produce a show as readily as Chicago," says Wald. You can rent a studio, even under contract, without going broke. This city has the right balance to do such things."

Leman agreed. "Most of my work has been work I've made happen myself. I was able to produce and act, a couple of years back, in a benefit for Season of Concern, a group that provides direct-care support to people living with HIV and AIDS in the theater community."

Leman later joined The Cypress Group, which was founded by four Chicago actors, including Shawn Simons and Jeffrey Lieber. *New City* named their production of *The Sea* as one of the top plays in 1994. "We began The Cypress Group because there seemed to be no real creative outlet for Equity actors and no creative home," tells Simons. "The Cypress Group is dedicated to the ensemble process. Actors are innately creative people and are capable of more than just learning lines and blocking."

"I saw a production of *Road* several years ago at the Remains Theatre. The show was directed by Bob Falls and it was, in a way, "environmental theater". The audience followed the actors from place to place during the show and at times were only inches away from them. It was a deeply moving experience as you felt truly like you were peeking into their lives. The production brought to life

Why did I become an actor?

Many people perceive actors as egotistical and self-centered. On the contrary, actors are ordinary people—aside from a few stuffed shirts in the bunch. They have to pay their bills like everyone else, with the only difference being that they are in a profession that does not guarantee them a steady paycheck. These actors have chosen to pursue their dreams on their own terms, instead of following society's norms.

The primary requirements are talent and dedication. While the Chicago acting pool is steadily increasing, the amount of theaters is not. There is plenty of competition and a certain amount of politics to go along with it.

"So why do I do it?" said Gonzo Schexnayder. "I love what I do and the people I get to work with. There is really nothing like this field. I'm fascinated every day I get a chance to play in it. I haven't found anything that makes me happier than being on a stage in front of people.

"I remember my mom telling me once about how I didn't talk until I was two-and-a-half. Being the first-born, she thought something was wrong and asked the doctor. He said that I knew how to speak, but because I had learned to communicate all my desires and needs non-verbally, I felt no need to. When she made a point to tell me to ask for something instead of gesturing, I started speaking—in full sentences. I think it was the beginning of my acting career."

"Doing theater has been a part of my life since childhood," said Andrew Leman. "It is something that I've always loved, and I guess I always knew I would be doing it in one form or another. It wasn't so much a question of choosing acting, as it was a question of choosing not to do anything else. Acting was a given."

"I wanted to be an actor because I loved the community the theater created," added Shawn Simons. "I stayed an actor because I found that I loved to explore, create and question."

"That's sort of the drive of all this. Trying to do different things that at one time you would have been so completely frightened over," said Maurissa Afanador. "Then you do it and there's that ultimate sense of accomplishment that comes from it."

"I like the responsibility, as an actor, of showing the audience who they are, what they dream, why they dream, how good and bad they can be, what possibilities we all have and what we need to work on," said Bradford Farwell.

"Every now and then there is a certain spark that happens when everything falls into place," said Tom Gottlieb. "It is a feeling of being completely present in the environment of the play and yet totally connected to my own perception of the world. These moments are not always there but it is worth all the crap I have to endure as an actor in order to have that experience. I haven't been able to find anything more fulfilling in my life."

"An actor can read a role on paper and then with his or her body, mind and voice create a person from thin air," stated Jeffrey Lieber. "Acting is about building people out of nothing."

Jason Singer summed it up in just a few short words. "Life is too short and what I do is too fun." □

the world in which the characters lived life to its fullest," said Simons.

Although Chicago is not considered an Equity town, there is some work available for those coming into the city already belonging to the Actors' Equity Association [AEA].

AEA is an actor's union that allows stage performers the ability to work under contract in pre-determined working conditions. It was established to protect the rights and safety of its members. The union provides benefits such as health insurance, pensions and other perks for its members. However, once an actor joins the union, he or she is not allowed to work for no pay—with very few and very strict exceptions.

Once a thriving Equity town, Chicago has since succumbed to the rise of non-Equity houses started by actors who just wanted to be on stage. This isn't a bad thing, however, since it allows for the acquisition of experience. But for actors who carry their union cards, it becomes a little harder for them.

"It would be fair to say that joining Equity has reduced my chances at work," said Leman. "The union theater scene in Chicago is small and therefore, very competitive.

"It's an unfortunate irony that the union that is supposed to make professional life easier and more lucrative often has precisely the opposite affect, at least for the newcomer in the short term," continued Leman. "I don't regret joining and I wouldn't advise other people to avoid it, but the timing of one's initiation can be an important factor."

"There are upwards of forty companies that use Equity contracts in Chicago," said Wald. "And Equity houses that come through Chicago to audition can boost that number to eighty to one hundred. That's a lot in my opinion."

Still, most of the stage work that can be found in Chicago is non-union. However, most of these theaters leave the actor having to take outside work in order to pay the rent.

"There is certainly great work being done in the non-Equity houses," added Lieber. "But a city that doesn't pay its actors will not keep them for very long."

Asked about his most memorable experience, Lieber remembered performing at Steppenwolf, "but not for the reasons one might expect. I remember Steppenwolf because it left me empty. Here I was working at the most respected theater in Chicago with some of the best actors around, and yet come closing night I felt sort of vapid because I knew it wasn't mine. The show was over, I was going my way and they were going theirs. End of story. It made me realize how much I wanted to build a theater of my own so that I didn't feel empty after every show." And that was exactly what he did. The initial, and successful production of The Cypress Group was a play that Lieber wrote, *Coming Back*.

It's [the Chicago actor type] difficult to define. It's not a physical type. They are actors who have quite a bit of practical experience, but not a lot of technical experience. Maybe it's that they're raw. Not necessarily untrained, but they have an edge

Financial security is definitely one aspect of the acting profession that is the most unpredictable, but these actors are pursuing something much more important than money. They are pursuing art. "I am secure in my heart. It's my wallet that's insecure. I chose my heart over my wallet," said Bradford Farwell, who originally graduated with a degree in math before studying classical acting technique in London.

"I came to Chicago because acting here was most accessible to me and I was at the point in my life where I thought money was not important," continued Farwell. "For a young actor in Chicago it is easy to act if you want to sacrifice money. I needed experience in the real world so I chose to be here."

While the paychecks these actors bring home may not be hefty, they can sometimes be enough for life in Chicago if enough work can be found. The actors that choose to work here are a determined group and those who establish permanent residency in this community may eventually make their way toward the center of recognition, money and power.

Whether they ultimately succeed or fail in Chicago, or end up in Los Angeles, New York or any other part of the country, these actors have worked hard at their craft. They haven't given up because this is what they want to do, this is what they are. Whether they continue to act for the rest of their lives or pursue a different direction, they will find, through the trials and tribulations of their careers, a satisfaction with their accomplishments. That is something each one of us hopes for in our own lives. □

Playin' the hits

Off the air with top-rated WGCI

BY OLANDRIAN GLASPER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY REBECCA ROULEAU

Blown in by the heavy rain, I stepped into the building; I was disoriented and flushed. Why did it have to be fist-to-hat raining on a day like today? Looking back through the glass revolving doors I saw a woman who I had passed, moments earlier, still fighting with her umbrella.

"Where to?" The guard wanted to know, before I could completely gather my composure.

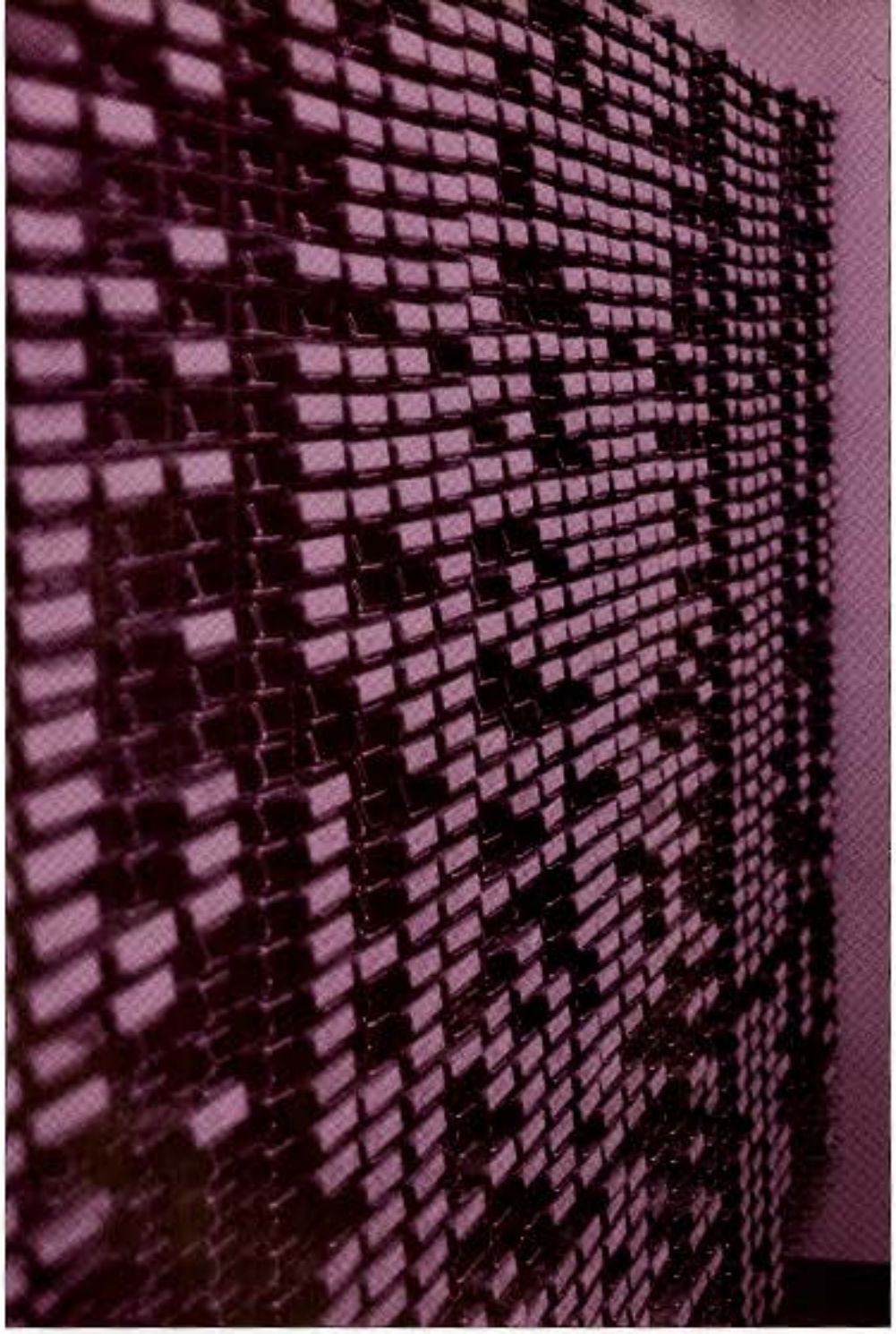
"WGCI," I managed to say as I scuffled to keep my school bag from falling to the floor.

"Take the elevator in the back," he said, "it'll take you straight up."

Oh yeah, I thought to myself, this guy has got to be thinking that I'm some sort of lucky Negril, Jamaica, contest winner or frantic caller number 13, who was simply coming to collect her "one-hundred-and-seven-fifty." That's $107.50 for tuning in to 107.5 WGCI and being the selected caller.

The elevator doors opened on the sixth floor and I wasn't ready. This was all I could think about for days now and old tension was becoming a forever friend. Steps beyond me, there were two clear doors, cuffed with silver handles. Beyond that, there were silver neon letters that spelled out WGCI. A pink neon strip spanned the room and beneath it was the sitting area. For a moment I thought that I was in a night club. There were purple leather seats, conveniently placed in a stage-like arrangement (you had to climb one stair to get to them). This is where I sat, pinning a large visitor's pass to my blazer while Princess, the receptionist, called my arrival to Naashon Gentry, Marv Dyson's Administrative Assistant.

"Mr. Dyson's nine o'clock is here," she told her while holding one finger up to a visitor who had just come in. She was your stereotypical Negril, Jamaica, contest winner. She wore long braids and a yellow jacket and could not stop smiling. She smiled at me, at Princess, and at anyone else who walked by. As soon as Princess got off the phone she leaned over to get my attention and said that I had



This guy has got to be thinking I'm some sort of lucky Negril, Jamaica contest winner...

arrived a bit early and that Dyson, President of WGCI, had not made it in yet. "I let Naashon know that you were here and she should be with you in a moment," she said.

Of course I knew who Naashon was, and she had probably had her share of me by now, too, as I'd graced her phone lines day after day trying to get in contact with Dyson.

When she came to get me, the gospel hit *The Reason Why I Sing*, by Kirk Franklin, was hitting the airwaves and could be heard throughout the reception area. Mentally, I was adding yet another question to my list: *A gospel song being played on the same station where one can hear controversial rap artists like Snoop Doggy Dogg and "bump-and-grind" artist R Kelly?* This has to mean something. As I rounded the corner, leaving club WGCI, with its warm and cozy lights and radio music, and entered the backbone of the station, I knew that I was going to find out what that meaning was. I had gone from wanting to let my hair down (it was in a bun), to the strange inkling that I was going to run into one of my old high school teachers, and so I sat, very erect and on edge. The people who walked briskly by me were far from party animals; they were white collar professionals—wearing blazers, neat little pumps or loafers.

I watched Naashon answer the phones and key words into a desktop computer; then she decided it was time to show me around the station. The first stop was the office of Velma L. Brazelton, Vice President and Director of Personnel and Community Relations.

"I guess you're saying that I've walked past you enough," she said with a welcoming smile, although she had in no way come close to what I'd been thinking.

In truth, she had been one of the first people I'd seen after the sudden change of lighting and I hadn't paid any attention to her missing me. On the contrary, the first word that came to mind when I saw her was *important*. How important she must be, with her stern face and straight forward glide—her eyes focused straight ahead—only seeing the task at hand. The first time she went by she didn't forget to say, "Good morning, ladies," to Naashon and her co-worker, Kim, who responded cordially, but she was truly on a mission. It was true that up until this point we had not been formally introduced, but through her mathematically vibrating steps, only inches away from where I sat, I had gathered an idea of her importance.

"Mr. Dyson still hasn't arrived yet," Naashon confided in me and offered me something to drink. Shannon Dell was on the air, *Lovin' you like a sister* (her radio slogan) and I, knowing that I would not be able to concentrate on a drink of any sort, declined. I had actually been enjoying the time that I was getting to check things out. Dell was on the air, trying to encourage her listeners that there was "still plenty of sunshine, in spite of the weather."

"This is not like him," Naashon was saying, concerned about her boss' unexplained lateness. Nevertheless, she continued to lead me around in a browse-stop-browse-stop manner. During this short period of time I had met and/or greeted individuals of the administrative, financial, engineering, programming and music, and news departments.

The news room was such a quaint little area that it held my attention. There sat two women, in a tight space, as papers and knick-knacks cluttered the narrow area. Now that I think about it, much of the hall space, at WGCI, was narrow.

Along the walls there are cases, housing gold and platinum record albums, of artists such as Michael Jackson and Michelle. I later learned from Vick Clemens, Music Director, that these and other memorabilia—posters, album covers, and demo tapes—are staple products seen in radio stations.

By 10:00a.m., I had learned quite a bit about Gentry. She began working at WGCI, as Marv Dyson's Administrative Assistant, in February, 1994, and she prefers her job at WGCI to her previous job (working with an engineering

company) because here, "I am able to work in a relaxed environment," she said.

A handsome, well-groomed gentleman was smiling his way into the office. "This has to be him, Da-Man," I thought. I couldn't help wondering if I'd, somehow, mumbled my thoughts out loud, because I later learned that this laid back gentlemen earned a master's degree in education—improper English was his pet peeve.

Weighed down by a briefcase, this newcomer stopped right at Naashon's desk and stood, tall, in front of me.

As he was laying his trench coat over a cuffed arm, Naashon made opportunity of this pause to introduce us.

"Shake like you mean it," he laughed, extending an open hand. Despite everyone's worry, this man obviously had not been harmed. Delayed maybe, by not harmed. As he was going to put his things away, he was met by Brazelton, who had almost turned to go the other way.

"Come here girl," he joked, stopping her cold.

"I thought you were busy," she responded. He stood there, waiting for her before explaining his late arrival.

"Somebody turned his car over on the Stevenson," he began as his facial expression became exasperated. "Luckily, they had an air bag and it didn't look like anybody was hurt," he said, completing the details of his adventure. He then led me into his office—a room of modern day finesse.

There was black leather furniture with drop down arms, a smoked glass table, and mini blinds hanging squarely from the windows that overlooked a busy Michigan Avenue. Interrupting the fine black color scheme, lurking on a wall nearby, was a pair of red Everlast boxing gloves. Originally given to the former president of WGCI by rap artist L.L. Cool J when his hit single, *Momma Said Knock You Out*, graced WGCI's airwaves, "he gave them to me when he left," explained Dyson.

Principal style, he sat before me, neat and up straight, behind a clutter-proof, black rectangular desk. Displaying a perfect smile, he talked about *his* station.

There are two types of ratings that radio stations worry about, *Arbitran*—the ratings that come out once a month—and *Arbitron*—the ratings that come out every three months. Today, WGCI was waiting for the *Arbitran* ratings, which were late, and the primary reason for Dyson manning the phones. The pressure was on, because in the past two years WGCI had made radio history by continually being rated the number one radio station for six consecutive quarters. However, with great radio personalities such as Tom Joyner, whose *Tom Joyner Morning Show*, is waking up people in more than 30 cities, it is hard to imagine

Black radio, urban contemporary, I don't know if there's a title for it, uh, soul music, yeah, that's it.

who, beside the administration, is keeping a count on the ratings.

The *Tom Joyner Morning Show* airs in Dallas, Texas and graces the Chicagoland radio airwaves from five to nine. WGCI's sassy line-up includes six other radio personalities. In format order they are as follows: Shannon Dell, from nine to eleven; Cr-Cr-Crazy Howard McGee on the *Crazy Show* from eleven until two; Doug Banks, the original self-proclaimed "idiot," airs from two until six; *Hey Rick Party*, airs from six until ten; Mike Hudson slows it down on the *Quiet Storm*, from ten until two; and finally, Irene "Mommaseeta" Mojica completes the cycle with a bit of the old and a little of the new.

Of course there are people like Kelly G and Steve Mistro, whose shows are geared toward a younger, urban audience.

Kelly G's strength is his show *The Bomb with Special K and Romonski Love* which airs Saturday nights at ten. *The Bomb* combines dance music in the form of mixes along with rap music. This means two types of music can be heard simultaneously to form a totally different sound.

Mistro, who joined WGCI in 1992, programs his own show *The Old School Mini-Mix*, which airs Friday nights from ten until two, and twice on Sundays. Mistro came to mix for WGCI after submitting his demo tape for selection.

"Let's get one thing straight," said Mistro, "there is no such thing as Black Radio."

"Black Radio, Urban Contemporary, I don't know if there's a title for it, uh, Soul Music, yeah, that's it." He said in a husky, vibrated, DJ-esque voice. What he may be getting at is the fact that the station is comprised of "black employees that play black music, by black artists, for a black audience," but the statistics show that the audience is not all black, although a large percentage of WGCI's listeners are. According to Dyson, about 78 percent of their listening audience is Black, 14 percent is White, and 6 percent is Hispanic.

Approaching the room, radio mixer Kelly G presented Mistro with a silhouetted photo. "This is something special for Steve Mistro," he said, almost bursting into laughter.

"I've been waiting for this picture," he said holding it down with two hands and shaking his head. "See this," he frowned beneath his chuckle, "this is why we get labeled Black Radio." The picture was of a rap artist, resembling a character out of the movie *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka*.

Hanging around at WGCI, I learned that casual clothing is fine for the station. However, when Kelly G is at his second job, a computer programmer for Kraft Foods, he has to put on his "game outfit for corporate America."

Shortly after that, I realized that Kelly G was wearing a suave gray suit and expensive looking shoes, unlike every other male in the music department who were comfortable sporting jeans and vests or loose fitting shirts. "Those are his hip-hop clothes," Mistro volunteered, matter-of-factly.

"These *are* my hip-hop clothes," Kelly G said. "I'm a hip-hopster. I do street promotions in my imitation Lester Holt voice."

"And I climb buildings," Mistro added, shedding light on the joke.

The music selection process at WGCI is primarily based on request calls the station receives from its listeners. The number of times a particular song is requested is the number of times that song is played (with a boost here-and-there from Clemens or Elroy Smith, Program Director).

Smith said that WGCI recruited him in February of 1985 as a person who could "really make a difference." In addition to working with the music department, Smith also works with both the traffic department (who are in charge of the commercials), and the DJs. His work with the DJs is "draining because everybody wants to be a star, and because I would like everyone to be a star, I am their coach. I'm the one would gives them that *special attention*."

The type of songs that WGCI will not play are those that incorporates foul or defamatory language. A recent trend, that began at WGCI with *The Reason Why I Sing* by Kirk Franklin, is that of giving air time to gospel music. WGCI joined this trend after a former co-worker of Smith's told him of gospel's growing popularity in the Boston area—today there is "no turning back."

This had been my third trip to the station and by the time it was over, I was sorry. WGCI had let me into their family and now it was time to say good-bye. On the way out, I turned in my visitor's pass at the reception desk. The lights were dim and all the white collar people had scattered to go to their weekend destinations. "Good night," I said to Smith on my way out. Turning back, I caught one last glimpse of the WGCI sign, which still beamed in neon, calm and soothing.

"Maybe I'll return," I thought. "Maybe I'll return one day as a Negril, Jamaica, contest winner, or lucky caller number thirteen." □

a history of surgery

You may never have heard of the International Museum of Surgical Science, on North Lake Shore Drive, but you have certainly seen it. It's that stately, four-story building whose front lawn is adorned by a, somewhat eerie, sculpture of a collapsing man being cradled by another. If this four-story building looks like it came out of a history book, it's deliberate. Famed Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw patterned it after Le Petit Trianon, the French chateau built on the grounds of Versailles for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

The museum's mission statement reads like a recipe for a very dull place: "To enrich people's lives by enhancing their appreciation of surgery and related subjects in health and medicine." Unlikely as it may seem, a visit to the museum is an unusual, sometimes disturbing and, yes, enriching experience that will leave no one unaffected.

Most museums are displays of reverence for an idyllic past that we all long for. The Museum of Surgical Science, in contrast, showcases how tentative, crude or even bru-

it's all there at the International Museum of Surgical Science

tal, the medical field was from its formative days until fairly recently. In fact, a visit to the museum elicits fears—of unknown diseases, of one's body going out of control, of death. But, in the end, it also brings a sense of relief—that we live in the late 20th century, and will never have to go through surgery without anesthetics; or regard a diabetes diagnosis as a death warrant.

The museum is a division of the International College of Surgeons [ICS], an organization founded in 1953 in Geneva, Switzerland, by Max Thorek, a Hungarian-born surgeon who practiced in Chicago. The museum was also founded in 1953, three years after ICS purchased the 1910 landmark building from the original owner, Eleanor Robinson Countiss.

"We compare favorably to other surgical museums around the world," said Barry A.

by Sergio Barreto *photographs provided by the International Museum of Surgical Science*

Van Deman, Museum Director. "Most museums in this field are very small. We have one of the largest."

The museum's four floors are packed with artifacts, surgical instruments, sculptures, illustrations, oil paintings and photographs that document the evolution of the healing practices of Eastern and Western civilizations from the BC era through the 20th century. Some of the museum's earliest artifacts include a number of instruments, believed to be surgical, that were uncovered in Upper Egypt, at the Temple of Kom-Bo, and date back to circa 3,000 BC; and 2,000-year-old trepanned skulls and trepanning tools recovered from ancient Peruvian tombs. Trepanning, or skull boring, a primitive brain surgery, was among the first types of surgery performed on humans—without the benefit of anesthetics. One imagines that trepanned patients (or is it victims?) would never recover from the experience, and maybe they did not. But some of the trepanned skulls in the museum reveal bony tissue growth, proving that some patients survived not only the actual procedure, but continued to for a few years as well.

The museum also documents shamanistic practices through items such as brightly colored cutouts, employed by Aztec descendants to fight off a number of ailments; ancestors' skulls, used by New Guinea shamans, to ward off evil spirits; and ornaments worn by North American witch doctors.

Artifacts, sculptures and illustrations hailing from India, China and Japan highlight the achievements of little-known Eastern pioneers, such as Yasuyori Tamba (912-955 AD), author of *I-Shin Po*, one of the oldest Japanese medical books; Hua-To (112-212 AD), the only prominent surgeon produced by ancient China, and perhaps the discoverer of narcosis; and Susruta (4th century AD), an extraordinarily advanced Hindu surgeon, who helped to invent many surgical instruments, practiced plastic surgery, gynecology and obstetrics (using an operation that we now know as a Caesarean), and emphasized the importance of complete cleanliness and careful preparation; who helped pave the way for modern medical practices.

The museum's Hall of Immortals honors the men and women whose contributions to medicine were so great, that they earned a place in the history of mankind. Eight foot stone-cast figures, sculpted by Edwouard Chassaing and Louis Linck, depict the likenesses of Hippocrates, Louis Pasteur, Madame Curie, and nine others, in one of the museum's most visually impressive exhibits. Too impressive, perhaps, for those with vivid imaginations. Walking through the Hall of Immortals on a dark, rainy, winter day, listening to howling winds and creaking floorboards, one might feel as though he were wandering through the set of a gothic horror film.

Europe's Age of Enlightenment is documented by such items as an oil painting depicting Ambroise Pare, an apprentice to a barber-surgeon who became a French icon through working in a battlefield, and a scale model of the Anatomical Theater at the University of Padua, Italy, which was one of the first sites of anatomical lectures based on direct observation.

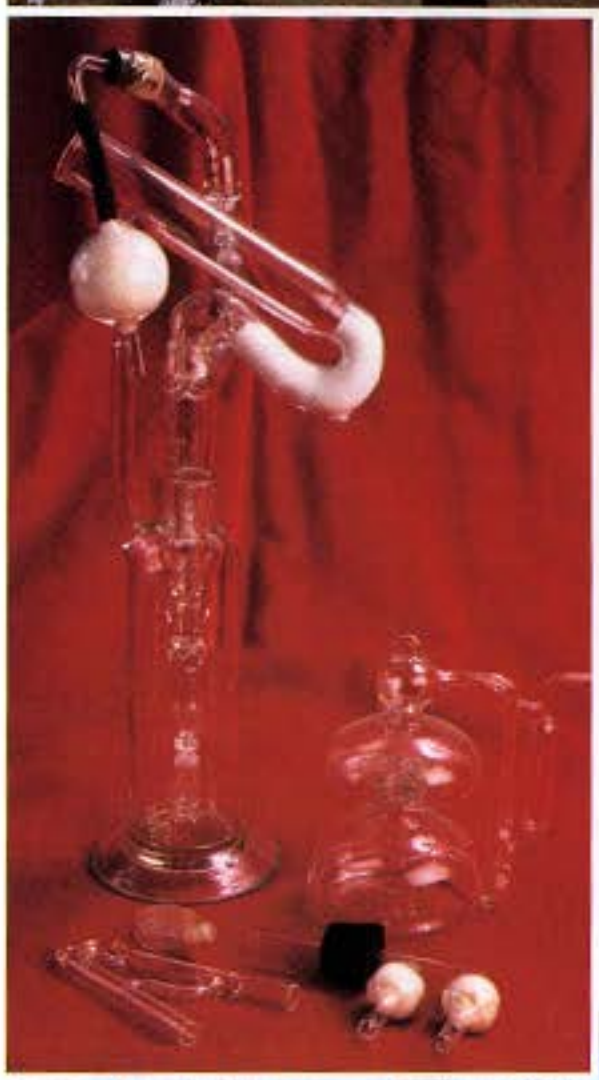
Moving on to America, the museum's curator's found the inspiration for their most whimsical exhibition: a re-creation of a turn-of-the-century drugstore, complete with a mechanical pharmacist ready to tell the story of his wondrous pill-making abilities and his own line of perfumes and cosmetics.

Key figures and moments in the history of 20th century medicine have been preserved for posterity through photographic displays. In one historical moment, a photo depicts Dr. Charles Best and Dr. F.G. Banting in the summer of 1921, on the roof of the Medical Building at the University of Toronto. Doctors Best and Banting were part of a four-man team that succeeded in isolating the internal secretion of the pancreas (insulin), which proved to be spectacularly effective in the treatment of then often-fatal diabetes; in the photo, they are joined by a seemingly ordinary dog that is, in fact, one of the first diabetic dogs to have its life saved by insulin.

The museum has its share of irreplaceable and priceless historical items. Its library contains more than 5,000 volummes, including many rare and first edition books, dating back to the 15th century. Researchers are welcome to use the collection, by appointment. The original Lindbergh Perfusion Pump (1935), donated by Charles Lindbergh himself, is on display on the first floor. It may come as a surprise to most to find out that the famed aviator, together with Nobel Prize-winning surgeon, Alexis Carrel, designed a pump that enabled biologists to keep organs in a functional state after being removed from the human body. But, perhaps the museum's greatest surprise is enclosed in a glass case on the fourth floor: the bronze death mask of Napoleon Bonaparte.

However, not all of the museum's exhibits are

a cutting tool from the early part of the 18th century.



above:
amputation tools used in the days of the Civil War.

left:
the Lindbergh Perfusion Pump, invented by aviator Charles Lindbergh and Dr. Alexis Carrel in 1935

below:
a recreation of an early 20th century drug-store—one of the most prized possesions of the museum.

pleasant to look at. According to Van Deman, even though most, of the approximately 10,000 museum visitors every year are adults, some of the items on display would still be considered creepy to most visitors. Morbid fascination aside, it is hard not to cringe while viewing photographs of children with hideously deformed limbs above an actual "bone crusher" used by Elven J. Berkheiser, a Chicago orthopedist, to correct bowlegs between the years 1918 and 1950; or an exhibition depicting some of the crude methods used to revive near-dead persons, such as: applying warm ashes to the victim's abdomen, hanging the victim upside down, or blowing smoke into his or her rectum; or a display of hand hooks and plastic or wooden prosthetic limbs; or a polio exhibit complete with a working iron lung machine that looks like something out of Frankenstein; or a set of amputation tools from the Civil War, including a saw that, with close inspection, one can still see bloodstains on it.

Even more mind-boggling is the gallstones and bladderstones exhibition, which leads unsuspecting visitors to realize that these things are, indeed, stones, just like those one can pick off the ground. These heinous little—and not so little—aberrations of human physiology come in all colors and shapes, and the sight of them can make a visitor's bladder quiver.

Perhaps most unpleasant of all is the Skin Disease, 1860-1884 exhibition. The walls of the museum gallery, which was opened in 1992, are lined with detailed paintings depicting stomach-turning skin ailments whose very names—Molluscum, Pityriasis Versicolor, and Leucoderma—even sound scary, but, thankfully, most of which have been long eradicated from the Western Hemisphere.

It takes a sizable amount of money to maintain this place that offers such an unusual mixture of history and morbid thrills. "An elaborate exhibition can cost anywhere between one-hundred and three-hundred thousand dollars" Van Deman said. The museum is funded through the International College of Surgeons, fund-raising and individual contributions. Volunteers are needed to help maintain exhibits, to lead tours and to work in the library, office and other areas. Contributors to the museum enjoy a variety if benefits including a subscription to the museum newsletter, invitations to lectures and special events and even access to the museum's library. In addition, all museum members receive free admission to more than 100 major science museums around the world. □

Silky

Stepping into

Through the haze of smoke and light on the dance floor, Silky Jumbo appears on a black platform, towering above the crowd. Her face, plastered with makeup, seems otherworldly and distinctly feminine. Her eyes seem flat and unfocused, fixed on some spot that the rest of the crowd cannot see. Her shape is very curvy, with a tiny waist, but she's seven feet tall. Clad head-to-toe in black PVC and a shocking pink ponytail, the look is very femme-fatale-come-cyber-ice-princess. A corset, cinched all the way, accounts for the tiny waist. Next to her, on his hands and knees, is a man, a pet, clad only in his underwear and the nose of a pig. Slowly she reaches down and attaches the chain dangling from her waist to the collar around her pet's neck. Obediently, the pig-boy starts down the platform on all fours, his mistress, two feet behind him. The crowd parts like the Red Sea, staring in amazement at the spectacle of Silky and her pet as they make their royal way across the crowded dance floor.

BY TRACY WARNELL

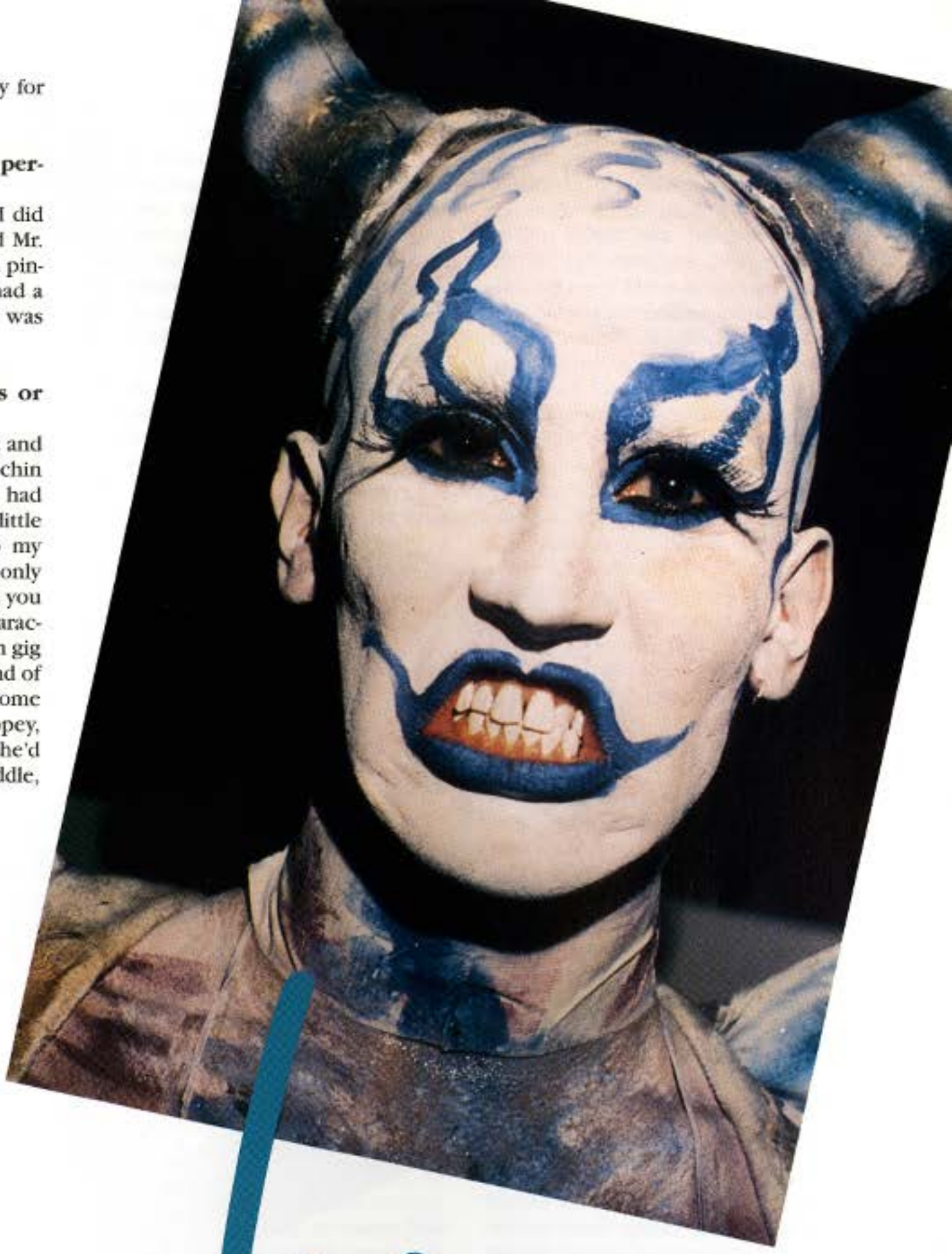
So begins another night for Silky Jumbo, performance artist/drag queen, who is paid to be at nightclubs where most people pay to be. Performance art, especially drag-related performance art, has become a *must have* for any happening nightclub in Chicago the last couple of years. In the pursuit of keeping their clientele entertained, clubs—both gay and straight—have been hiring people who push the boundaries of the norm. These people both shock and titillate the audience through dancing and performance. Their goal is to keep the energy of the crowd going higher and, most importantly, keep them coming back, week after week, for more. Silky Jumbo is a master (or mistress) of this kind of entertainment.

I met with Silky Jumbo (who acquired his name at the last minute before a performance—off of a package of fake hair) at Vortex, a gay nightclub at the north end of "the strip" on Halsted Street. Silky, artist that he is, was finishing up the Christmas sets that he had designed for this large, two-story club. We talked in his dress-

ing room as he was getting ready for the show that night.

Tracy: Where did you start performing in clubs?
Silky Jumbo: In San Francisco. I did a little puppet show thing called Mr. Slippy Fudgey Waters, who was a pinhead, blues guy. A midget and I had a backing band. The whole show was basically schlock.

T: So were you guys puppets or were the puppets on stage?
SJ: Actually, I would put on a hat and when I hung upside down, my chin became a face. He [the puppet] had this little body and this weird little face that went on my chin. So my mouth is moving as his mouth, only it's upside down. It's trippy when you do it right,. So along with that character, I had this country and western gig called Eddie Cockring. He was kind of a takeoff on Eddie Cochran. I'd come out as Eddie and start with this dopey, little country song and then he'd transform, somewhere in the middle, into this total kind of nutbag.



Jumbo

the world of a drag performer

T: So who were your influences out there?

SJ: I worked with Vido, this guy in California, who is an eighty-year-old performance artist. He's a nutty old guy who had a company called Freestore. Actually, we did this Easter performance where he was the Easter Bunny, I was Jesus, and we wrestled. We had made the ring out of PVC tubing, and this is, like, an eighty-year-old man, who's four feet tall, but is spry and running around and humping girls' legs and stuff. He's great. He has this little house, a million kids and three wives. Anyway, I pick him up and I'm twirling him around on my shoulders. Then, he runs back to go and bounce off the ring, but he didn't realize that if he did it, the ring was going to break. He went flying over the edge of the stage and I thought, *Oh my God, I just killed him. My set construction lacked; therefore, I've killed him.*

T: Did he die?

SJ: No, no, he was fine. Although he did have a big bruise on his butt. I hope that I have such an enchanted life, and live to be seventy-five or eighty, and still be doing wacky shit and having fun.

T: Then you went to Chicago?

SJ: No. A bunch of us bought a VW bus and decided that we were going to roam the country. I really wanted to try street performance, which was hard to do in San Francisco. I wanted to go to New Orleans. New Orleans and New York are really the only cities where you can perform. So we went to New Orleans and I spent a little less than a year doing street performances. I did quite a lot of work with Otter, this girl who is currently making quite a name for herself with her performances in New York City. Otter would be this, like, statue creature. She would stand with me in Jackson Park where there was this beautiful, wrought-iron fence with this little landing. We'd cover her with plaster in this Greco-Roman goddess outfit. Then we'd walk her out to the square and she'd stand very still. The tourists would come by and they would do a double take like, *"George, George, that's a real person,"* Then they'd come up and want to take our picture and so they'd give us money for taking pictures of that. I also had this jack-in-the-box character, where I built this big box which I put in the middle of the street and I'd plop down inside it. On the outside of the box it read *Put In a Quarter and Turn Crank*. I would pop out and abuse them, scare them. It had this great element of surprise. That worked really well, but the statue gig was the real money maker.

T: How much money?

SJ: On Saturdays and Sundays everybody swarmed to the French Quarter, so we'd make about one-hundred to one-hundred-and-fifty dollars a day, in dollar bills and quarters. Then we'd go to the Dream Palace where they had quarter beers and just sit there and count our money. It was, "One for you, one for me. Get me another beer." That was fun. I learned a lot about participatory performance and interacting with people, because when you're on the street—out there with anybody—there are a bunch of assholes. It gave me a tougher shell.

T: Have you made a lot of money with one certain performance ?

SJ: We devised this game called Horney Toss, where I'm, like, the ringmaster in a carnival, and then I have other performers who are my horned creatures. They have horns coming off of different parts of their bodies and I get the audience to toss rings on their horns. They get prizes if they get three rings. It's your basic ring toss game. The characters, who are like creatures, are in really heavy makeup. It's body paint and prosthetics, so they look like real fantasy creatures.

T: I saw you do that once at Crobar.

SJ: Yeah, I usually do that one with my friends, Tim and Theresa. People really respond to it because we just kind of, like, storm into a room, put them [the creatures] up there and, before you know it, people are coming up and throwing rings at the creature's genitalia because there's a big horn on each one.

T: What's the prize if you get three rings?

SJ: Usually just tsatske shit. We did it once in Los Angeles and gave away potatoes.

T: How do you create your different characters or costumes?

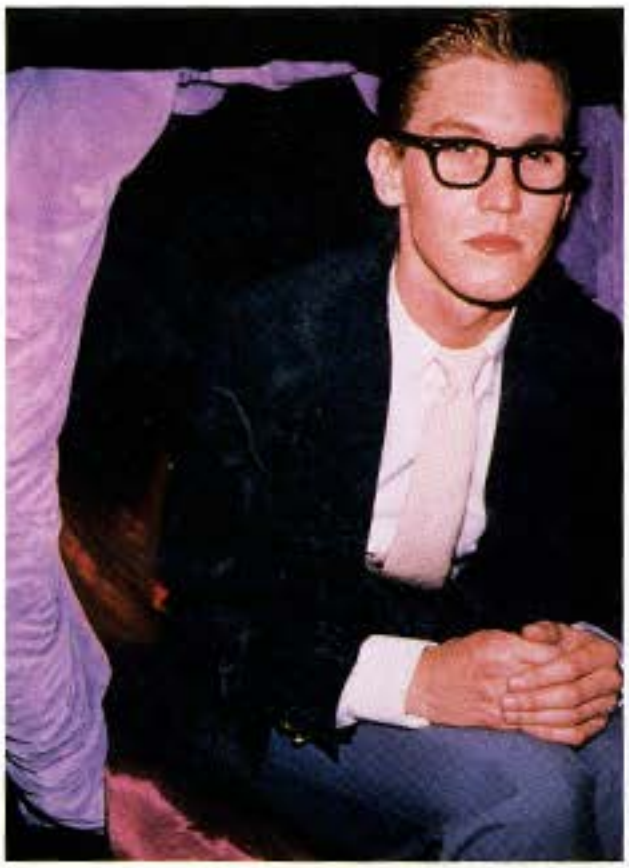
SJ: Usually it starts with some weirdness that relates to a wig and then I develop the rest around that. One thing about doing clubs is that you have to have something different every week, or every other week, or something like that. It's just like, "What am I going to do tonight? Well, I have this piece and I have that piece and if I throw them all together I, oh wow, it makes that." Does that make any sense?

T: Yes, but I guess that you have to have all the pieces to collect in the first place.

SJ: Well, yeah. I kind of have to look around the room and say well, I have a girdle, some tape, a hunk of hair and a dog nose.

T: So, exactly, what do you do to get ready for a show?

SJ: When we're doing fantasy creatures and working with the body paint, it's a lot of work. We have to start out with a latex bald cap to cover the hair. Then, a lot of the time is spent preparing the pieces and bringing them in to where you're doing the performance. The trick is to



make sure that you have everything you need at the moment that you need it. It involves buying a lot of makeup, paint, safety pins and all that shit.

T: Where did you learn how to use makeup?
SJ: Trial and error. The best way that I've learned to do anything is just by going and doing it, grabbing it. Especially working at clubs, where there is such a big influx of all different types of people. You learn to pick up little stuff. There was this really fantastic drag troupe in San Francisco that worked at the same clubs that Theresa and I were working at, and a lot of the time, we ended up in the same dressing room. They were more old school, but they were outrageous in the sense of creating over-the-top characters, but not necessarily trying to look exactly like women. They were characteuring. They had many nifty makeup tricks and we copped them all. I think that artists and people in general should have a free exchange of ideas and tips and stuff like that. I don't think, *"Oh, don't do that, that's mine."* You should share ideas and methods. Then there are more people out there doing new things, and then you're multiplying like spores.

T: So in terms of being a woman you're not concerned with looking pretty?
SJ: Pretty and beautiful are two different things.

T: Exactly.
SJ: Something can be very beautiful that is not conventionally pretty. I'm trying to stretch limits and do things in a different way—not to go down the beaten path as far—well, especially with drag.

T: Can you describe the beaten path?
SJ: To me the beaten path is putting on a sequin dress that you got at Filene's Basement, a pair of office pumps, and then going out and buying a bunch of Chanel products. You end up looking like some suburban mall matron. Then getting up on stage and lip-synching to Laura Branigan, singing some really sappy love song, some really mellow hit song, and trying to be some magazine ad or something. I'm not putting it down in the sense of the gender-bending thing.

T: So what is your idea of drag?
SJ: I feel more like this clown-woman-earth-mother-sea hag, you know. She's a witch and a goddess. She's a tramp and a nun all at the same time.

T: She has many facets?
SJ: The best way to describe her is in the clown sense. I see myself as a clown when I do drag. Somebody who acts the fool in order to make others feel comfortable acting the fool. In the nightclub, if you act ridiculous, maybe people will loosen up and they won't be so uptight and say, "Man, this one's really making a fool out of herself. I can't even come close to being that much of a fool, so I might as well relax and have a good time."

T: Do you ever feel larger than life? Like when you're on stage on the stilts? You project that image. ***(Silky can dance or cruise a dance floor on stilts that make him about nine feet tall. Most of the time the stilts are hidden by a long, full Victorian-looking skirt, which creates quite a spectacle).***
SJ: Now the stilt thing is—shamanistic is too heavy of a term—but, in a sense, it's very accurate. When I get up on stilts and out on the dance floor, I want to get people pumping. I want to get them dancing, moving around and trying to get everybody together, like a cheerleader does. I'm somewhere between a shaman and a cheerleader. It's the type of thing where I not only want you to sit down and watch me, but I want you to be a part of this. I want to get you excited about moving, letting go and releasing because this is your time. You're here. You're dancing. This is the time that you are free of all your worldly concerns—the rent and all that shit. You went out to just get away from it all for a while so, to me, it's like, "Let's get higher and higher and higher with the music and the lights and everything."

T: What is the worst thing that can happen on stage?
SJ: The things that are really horrible are when you're supposed to be on stage at a certain time, doing a certain thing, and you want it so badly to work. You have this vision in your head of how you want it to go off. But because of circumstances, you can't get everything on or there when you need it and everything breaks. None of the effects go off. Nothing explodes or falls off when it's supposed to. Your whole attitude is contingent on these little effects. On Halloween we were doing this one set, and none of the effects that I had worked so hard to get, went off. So I was just like, "Fuck it." I ended up ripping the blood bag out of my shirt and pouring it over my head and just thinking, *"Fuck, I give up. I GIVE UP !!!"*

T: What's the best?
SJ: Well, especially on the street, I have had a couple of experiences where people had never seen anything like my performances before and were so amazed and happy to see them. They [the spectators] let me know about it and I thought, *"God, I am doing something right for the world. I'm amazing them and they're really happy about this. It's great that this is in the world and it's right here and I did that, I gave something to somebody. I gave a really good feeling to somebody."*

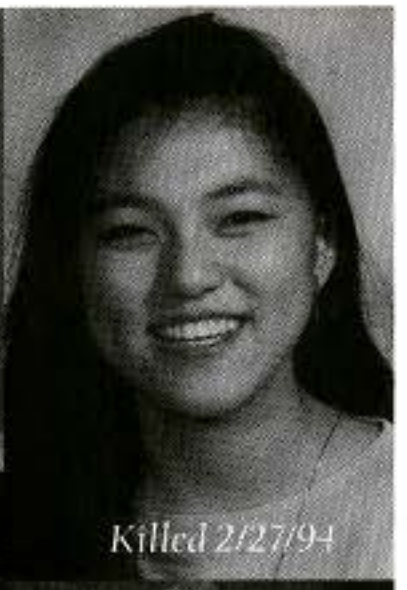
Then the music came blaring over the sound system, signaling the club was open. I left Silky to finish dressing and to spackle (put on makeup) in a hurry. for the nights performance. □

designed by Janine Marie


Killed 4/16/93


Killed 6/23/93


Killed 3/23/93


Killed 2/27/94


Killed 11/1/89


Killed 3/18/92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*Killed 12/5/92


Killed 12/29/89


Killed 3/29/91

DRUNK DRIVING DOESN'T JUST KILL DRUNK DRIVERS.


Killed 11/8/92


Killed 3/22/87


Killed 12/24/92


Killed 8/26/90


Killed 5/18/91

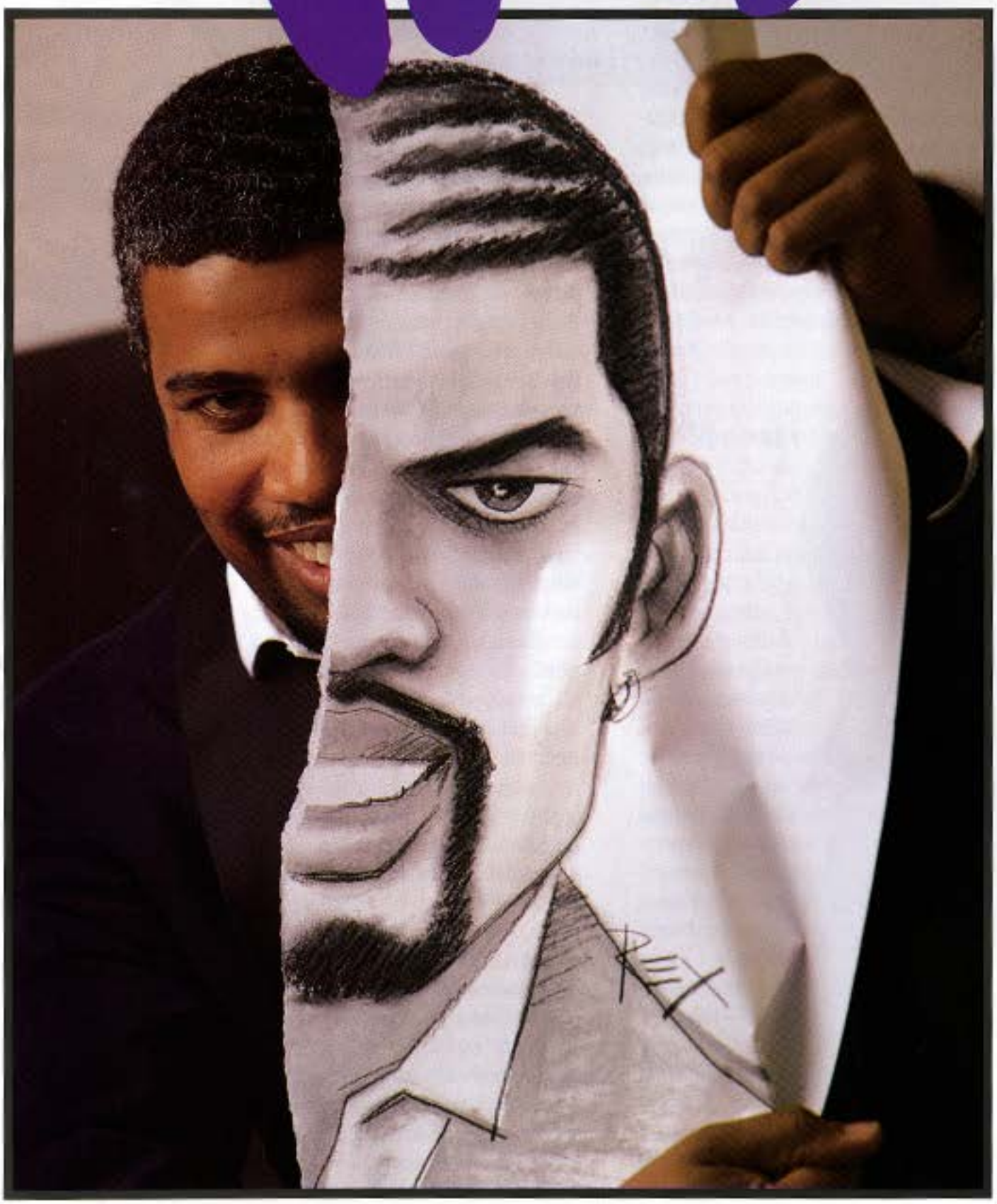
If you don't stop your friend from driving drunk, who will? Do whatever it takes.

FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS DRIVE DRUNK.

Ad Council

U.S. Department of Transportation

Hip-Hop Heaven



Artist Rex Perry is the king of all he purveys

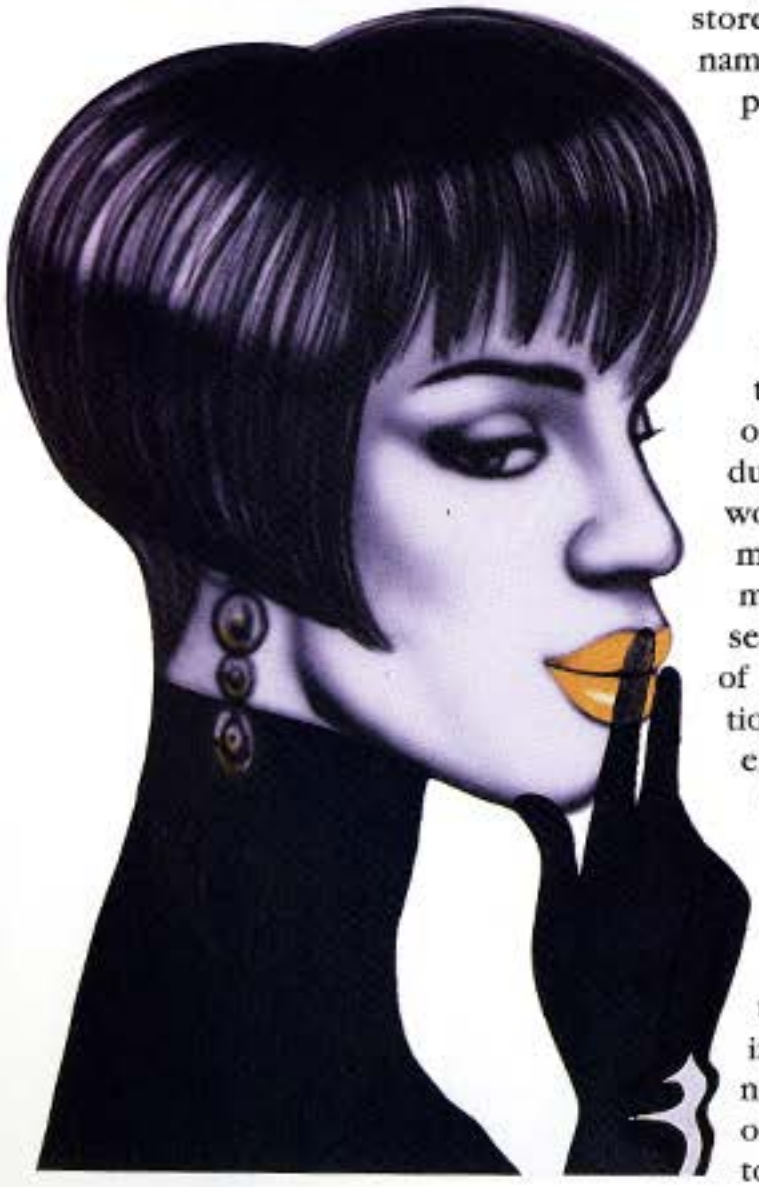
BY APRIL KNOX

There are five faces of young African-American women; each woman's face is turned in a different direction; each image is seen in a different shade of purple, and all are projecting daydream-like expressions. The images are clear, but different. Each woman has feline facial features: whiskers, slanted eyes, keen pink noses, plum mouths and ears that point to the heavens. In the far right hand corner of this illustration, the artist's signature is scribbled..."Rex".

"I've never wanted to grow old and say...I wish that I should have..." said Craig Rex Perry, the multi-talented, African-American, visual artist. Perry has produced illustrations for Carson Pirie Scott, Bloomingdales, Marshall Field's, McDonald's, Coca-Cola and the Johnson Publishing Company, among many others.

Perry grew up in the Englewood area on Chicago's South Side and graduated from Lindbloom High School in 1977. "One of my high school teachers, Ann Greany, pushed me to further my illustration and drawing abilities. I owe a lot to Greany and to my mom." By pushing his talents in high school, Perry was accepted to Chicago's School of the Art Institute. After graduation, in 1982, Perry immediately moved to California and began illustrating for Broadway, a department store chain, while continuing his education at the Otis Parsons Art School.

In 1985, Perry decided to move back to Chicago where he began freelancing his illustrations to many department stores, including Bloomingdales and Marshall Field's. "I have worked for almost every department store you can name," Perry explained, "and through producing that type of work, I learned that, sometimes, instead of always producing new work, you can make more money by just selling copies of past illustrations." However, it wasn't until Perry had the opportunity to illustrate in Europe that he realized that he needed more of a challenge to keep him inspired. This challenge was found in his own images and designs, instead of in someone else's. This realization eventually brought Perry back to the United States and where his passion for cartoons would eventually launch *Hip Hop Heaven*.



"I love cartoons," Perry said smiling. Like thousands of other children, he enjoyed watching super hero cartoons—his favorite being Spiderman. Perry practiced drawing those images as a child.

"I've always had a natural ability to draw," Perry said, and today he enjoys his own cartoon creations—the crew of *Hip Hop Heaven*, which, according to Perry, are "more realistic" than most other cartoons. "I create my own concepts and ideas about how I want my characters to be portrayed."

The *Hip Hop Heaven* characters are a group of young male and female African-Americans who made their debut in Perry's comic book *Hip Hop Heaven*. The characters have also been featured by Coca-Cola to show the world that education, knowledge, a positive attitude, pride, persistence and respect are the keys to making their futures bright.

Rex, as he is often called, always wanted to create characters which portray the African-American community, and its youth, in a positive light. "I wanted people to see another side to our lifestyle and culture—one that, unfortunately, is too often portrayed in a negative way."

The *Hip Hop Heaven* crew includes: Steamboat, a Fat Albert of the 90s; Rasheed Abdul, a conscious young "brother" who believes that "black is back;" Money, a well-dressed, smooth-talker; and Feather, an attractive "sister" who just goes with the flow.

The crew of *Hip Hop Heaven* appear in a monthly comic strip in *YSB* (*Young Sisters and Brothers*) magazine. Posters of the *Hip Hop Heaven* crew were also seen in John Singleton's film *Poetic Justice*. The entrance of the hair salon where Janet Jackson's character, Justice, worked is pasted with Perry's characters.

Perry insists that his characters will one day be admired by young inner-city African-American kids across the country, just the way Superman and Spiderman were admired by his generation. He is on his way to accomplish this by entering his *crew* into both worlds of animation and commercial design. This process has Perry pitching his characters to Carson Pirie Scott—for use as fashion illustration—in marketing a new clothing line, consisting of big, baggy pants; T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts.

Perry's determination grows stronger, although he knows that "everyone's trying to break into the Black Market." He hopes however, that the strength of his art will continue to prevail. "If it hasn't already happened, then I know that I have a chance to make it happen," Perry stated. "The spectrum in the world of art is much broader now," therefore, Perry knows that his diverse talents as an illustrator will continue to be well-respected.

Looking beyond his work as an artist, Perry came to a point in his life when he decided that teaching would be an essential key to help other young artists, so he became an instructor at his alma mater the School of the Art Institute. For five years, "a whole new generation of artists and art directors" were able to share Perry's many experiences and learn from his mistakes. Perry tells his students of the time when "I was hired to create an illustration of a black family eating Stove Top Stuffing. However, after the company made me change the characters features so many times, I began to hate it, and didn't care anymore about the quality of work. The end result was an advertisement that ran in magazines like *Ebony* and *Essence* for a long time. That's why I always tell my students 'Never produce anything that you are not personally proud of, because it can come back to haunt you'."

Joseph Hall, a former student of Perry's, said, "I thought that I was the greatest fashion illustrator in the world...then Rex brought me back to reality." In establishing and improving "raw talent, Rex stressed drawing hands and feet [in advanced figure drawing] for 'if you can draw good hands and feet, then you are a wonderful artist'."

Today, Perry teaches a group of young cartoonists at the Marween Foundation, located at the Rebecca Crown Center, because, he wanted to give something back to his own community.

Beyond teaching and *Hip Hop Heaven*, Perry has also held a job that he "really wanted." That job was designing the back drops (fashion illustrations that dress a stage) for the annual Ebony Fashion Fair Show, which he describes as being a great experience, but a tremendous amount of work. Perry also produced department store displays for Flora Roberts, an African-American cosmetics company. The abstract drawings of lips, eyes, and cheeks are illustrations that Perry "loves to do. They are simple, clear, expressive and kind of artsy. They look easy to draw because you draw less lines, but the less lines you use, the more difficult the drawing is to create."

Perry said that he creates his best work at "two or three in the morning. Sometimes, in the middle of working on one project, I can easily pick up something else to work on. At times, I see everything so clearly and because I want my voice to be heard throughout the work, I find that both, in drawing everything and, at times, even in drawing a few lines, creates an image that can display what I want it to display."

Today, Perry still lives in Chicago where he is working on an addition to Planet Hollywood. The project, All-Stars Café, will feature images of all-star athletes on the walls of the restaurant.

With, all his successful accomplishments to date and his on-going determination, surely Craig Rex Perry will have little reason to say, in later years, "I wish that I should have..." □


LOUNGE
FX

Loungin' at the Ax

a staple of Chicago underground music thrives in the nineties

by Laurie Miller
photographs by Chris Sweda

The band mounts the stage and tunes up. Singles, couples, groups of people meander from the back of the room toward the stage, drinks in hand. By the time the lights go out, the area in front of the stage is tightly packed with fervid rock fans. People over six feet tall could probably see the band from almost anywhere in the club; its long, narrow dimensions make it impossible to escape the band on stage. But, fans seeking the ultimate view, especially those less endowed in height, anchor themselves on the two-step platform that runs along either wall. The steps serve as mini bleachers, and people take advantage of this unique feature at Lounge Ax, the alternative rock club on North Lincoln Avenue.

The band erupts, and the rectangular room is seized by sounds, both loud and clear. Fuchsia, blue and yellow lights pulsate in time with the music. In the constant flux of the underground music scene, grunge is out and the early 80s are back. Some people bop around to the irresistible surf beat, while others stand—arms folded across their chests—and watch with a critical eye. Lounge Ax is a place where many rock fans know that they'll be among the first witnesses to the infusion of new rock blood. These are the blood cells that keep the music scene growing and thriving from the ground up. Lounge Ax has dwelled—in rock n' roll's basement—for eight years. These are the movers and shakers; they chart the course of pop music.

But the club didn't win its prominence overnight. When co-owner and manager Julia Adams founded the club with then-partner Jennifer Fischer in 1987, it featured mostly local and lesser-known underground acts.

Adams' acquisition of the tavern, in the heart of Lincoln Park, near DePaul University, was just a matter of course.

"It was for sale and we just decided to buy it," Adams said casually. "Originally, it was two separate rooms with funky mirrors on the walls. We left it that way for a while."

> Lounge Ax nurtures an intimate atmosphere for live music. It isn't grandma's house, but the two couches near the bar look as if they could have been donated by her.

Two years later, Susan Miller bought out Fischer and took over the booking. Miller and Adams then remodeled the club, making it one big room, more suited for live music.

As Miller began booking more touring underground acts, Lounge Ax evolved into a major player on the national underground music scene. This scene consists mostly of bands who intend to keep a low profile. But not all low-profile bands necessarily wish to stay underground. The term *underground*, which refers to a movement of avant garde artists and

musicians, can sometimes get lost in the same word void that *alternative* has fallen into—the void where words lose their meaning.

Miller said that the club's success has had a lot to do with building relationships.

"I was able to take my contacts and certain loyalties with me from other clubs I've booked," she said. "We treat bands well and that's usually rewarded with loyalty." Miller booked the Cubby Bear for two years, and West End for three years before coming to Lounge Ax.

Adams agreed with this rudiment of success. "We put bands up [from out of town], give bands drink tickets...word of mouth gets around that we go out of our way to treat bands well and that we're fair," Adams said.

Amid the collage of *alternative* rock music clubs in Chicago, Lounge Ax is the second oldest, after Metro. But while most of the other rock clubs are located in hot-spots, such as Wicker Park and Wrigleyville, Lounge Ax resides in affluent, but culturally stagnant, Lincoln Park. And with many establishments—including Wax Trax records—relocating to Wicker Park, Chicago's most recent artist mecca, one might wonder if Lounge Ax feels left behind.

"Lounge Ax is in a yuppy neighborhood, but why should we move?" Miller asked. "Wicker Park is turning into Lincoln Park, so what's the point? We just concentrate on getting good bands in here. Anyway, now we have a parking lot."

> Lounge Ax is a place where many rock fans know that they'll be among the first witnesses to the infusion of new rock blood.

The club's location doesn't appear to be affecting its ability to draw a crowd, according to Adams. "We are definitely a destination bar," she said. "It's true we don't really fit in here. We don't try to be anything. The neighborhood has changed, but our clientele really hasn't."

Lounge Ax may not try to be anything, but it has become one of the "well-respected" clubs on the Chicago club circuit, and most musicians will tell you that one of their favorite aspects of playing Lounge Ax is its sound system.

A poster, advertising the Chicago band Motorhome, is one of many hanging next to the bar. Bassist/ vocalist Kristen Thiele comes to Lounge Ax for the "band quality," but she also says its one of her favorite clubs to play. She praises their soundmen, Gary and Mark, as "great sound guys."

Another local band, The Handsome Family, who Miller termed "up-and-coming", rates the club as a top choice.

"Lounge Ax just sort of lets you do what you do," said bassist/vocalist Rennie Sparks. "The soundmen are really professional, even on Tuesday nights [when most unknown bands play]. Even if you're an unknown band, they treat you like you deserve a good sound."

While the sound system at Lounge Ax is appreciated by most bands, its rumored reputation for slamming the door, in the faces of unsigned bands, is not. Carlos Mendoza of The Proud explained. "It's a real good place to play, it's got a good sound system, it's high profile, but it's really hard to get in there," said Mendoza, whose band finally got a show at the club. "We'd literally been trying for two years and they would never call us back.

Unsigned local bands and lesser-known out-of-town bands often get booked on a Wednesday or Thursday night. Miller said that a large part of her booking deals are with agents and record labels, but, she insisted, interesting, unsigned bands also get a chance.

"We listen to every tape we get," Miller said. "Bands should be persistent without being annoying. We sometimes get people with negative attitudes calling. The most important thing is: *Don't have an attitude*."

As is the case with many local rock clubs, most of the music fans who are drawn to Lounge Ax are risk-takers. They'll gamble several bucks on a band they may or may not like. Lounge Ax is crowded almost every weekend, despite the $7 or $8 cover charge, an indication that its patrons come with high expectations. Of course, they sometimes know exactly what they'll get. Like other clubs, such as Metro, Double Door and Empty Bottle, Lounge Ax also features big-name acts including The Jesus Lizard, The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and Liz Phair.

But unlike Metro and Double Door, Lounge Ax nurtures an intimate atmosphere for live music. It isn't grandma's house, but the two couches near the bar look as if they could have been donated by her. In the dim lighting, one can see that the paisley print, on the faded beige, blends in nicely with the booze stains. The couches rest on an elevated part of the floor, against one wall. People lounge on them—smoking and talking. Some place their drinks on the cocktail table between. Some people sit on the platform.

A giant chalkboard hanging above the bar greets people as they deliberate over beer selections scrawled in chalk pastels. It's reminiscent of a third grade classroom. "Everyone's Welcome at Lounge Ax," it says across the top of the board in cursive. Huber beer is a particularly welcome treat at a buck per glass.

Sparks described the intimacy of Lounge Ax's and their support of local bands as "maternal instinct."

"They don't care what people think if they do other things," she said, referring to such shows as Thax After Dark, a local variety showcase hosted about every other month at Lounge Ax by poet Thax Douglas; or Betsy and the Boneshakers, a quasi-Janis

Lounge Ax owners Julia Adams and Sue Miller

Joplin band, almost every Tuesday night. The club even calls itself "Home of Ballharvester" in its ads, which, it turns out, is a band put together for fun by two of the waitresses.

The back of the room is filled with various band paraphernalia. Band stickers are plastered upon a portion of the old wall near the ceiling. On the wall next to the bar, a black light adds an ominous purple glow to the florescent special-effects posters hanging there. Next to them, on top of the black-and-white photo booth, are cardboard cutouts of Miller's head on Dolly Parton's body and Pat McCurdy's head on Elvis Presley's body. A revolving photo/art gallery is set above the couches. Hanging there are photos of musicians who have inhabited the stage, at one time or another, or intriguing works of locals artists.

Perhaps the oddest of all of these knick-knacks and mementos is a set of four male dolls standing on a shelf above the bar. The figures resemble The Beatles in their early mop-top days. The same figures adorn a poster seen on the way downstairs to the rest rooms. They represent The Coctails; and "of all the clubs in Chicago, they [the Coctails] only perform at Lounge Ax," said drummer/bassist/vibraphonist Mark Greenburg. The band started playing at Lounge Ax in 1991.

"When we first brought our tape here, Sue and Julia really liked it and they gave us shows right away," said Greenburg, who sometimes works the door and tends bar. "We just started playing once a month and kept building and building."

As people saunter in from Lincoln Avenue, they display their club passports—a picture ID, at least 21 years. Most of them are in their 20s and early 30s. Capacity is 450, but that's if nobody moves or breathes. Sold-out nights are when Lounge Ax feels more like a crowded garage than a rock club. But some people would say that this only adds to the ambiance, especially for the *underground*, and enhancing the club's hipness rating. And over the years, Lounge Ax has seen more appreciation for this [their ambiance] as alternative music hit the mainstream, and Chicago hit the spotlight.

Greenburg said he has noticed that he meets more people who know about the club when The Coctails tour. "Lounge Ax has much more national recognition now. A lot of bands know about it and, when they come to Chicago, they want to play here. It's like the CBGB in New York."

Word of mouth is the main ingredient of the underground. Because of this, according to those involved, popular movements tend to have little or no effect on the underground scene.

And just as neighborhoods take turns as creative centers, cities reach their boiling points. Right now, with Chicago having been called "The Next Seattle," some people may wonder if it's only another media trick.

"It's definitely a lot of hype," said Miller. "It doesn't really affect us. We booked bands before it happened and we'll be doing it after it's over." □

designed by Steven Hildebrand

nothing personal

I once thought the sun turned into the moon, "holey" jeans were blessed and gay men could physically have children. I wanted to be a journalist so I could prove the about statements were false. After my internship at Women's Wear Daily, I knew I wanted to work on a fashion magazine and include "holey" jeans as much as possible. **Shannon M. Sauter**

I first discovered my passion for writing when I was in eighth grade. I wrote passionate love letters to my boyfriend who continuously broke my heart by cheating on me. The letters and poems were also angry and filled with that fine line between love and hate. I expressed myself in the letters, something I couldn't do otherwise because I was shattered. I dumped him soon after eighth grade and regained my sanity.
In high school I was a magazine maniac. I subscribed to dozens of magazines, postered my walls with covers and ads— they became my new obsession. I followed my passion for writing and my obsession for magazines and here I am, living proof that meaningless hobbies can get you a paycheck. **Kim Siemienas**

After having my brian almost sucked out in the vacuum that is Los Angeles, I decided to move to Chicago and become a professional club crawler. Crowsfeet, hangovers and a constant case of pinkeye (from passing out with fake lashes on) made me decide that there had to be an easier way. Writing about it instead of living it seemed the most logical choice—next to A.A. **Tracy Warnell**

When I was little I always wanted to drive a cement truck, but as I got older I discovered that journalism was the profession for me! By the time this magazine is published, I hope to have a job—preferably in New York City. **Todd Dell'Aringa**

Who am I and if not then why? What can I believe when it is not what matters unless one knows? Truly knows. How can I be where I am without being elsewhere under other circumstances? Is it cosmic or merely earthly to pry the mantle of wisdom from the pungent surn of experience? I ask questions. Sometimes, no one answers. It's my job. **Don Gold**

When I grow up I want to be...
a Santa Claus helper—not an elf;
a pitcher for the Chicago White Sox;
a Dallas Cowboy Cheerleader—didn't everyone?
and now that I'm all grown up, what do I want to be?
An astronaut...
or an art director,
whichever comes first.
Georgine Panko

I grew up on a small farm in northwestern Illinois. I started to become a writer, instead of a dairy farmer, at a young age thanks to Herbie. Herbie and I were pretty close. In fact Herbie didn't like anyone else. My father and Herbie didn't get along at all. I liked Herbie so much that he was the subject of the first story I ever published—in my fifth grade class's newsletter. Herbie was the best pet rooster a girl could have. **Susan Naese**

I became a writer because I sucked at math. The greatest irony in pursuing a writing career is that numbers still followed me. Credit hours, GPA's, loan payments, scholarship disbursements, ten-ride train tickets, tollway change, parking fees and lunch money. So, now, if a picture is worth a thousand words and one word is worth two dollars and one story is 4800 words...
Joanne Buckley

When I was little, I used to love watching the trains pass by. If I didn't pay attention, I would scream out, "I missed it!" The first time I rode a train, I was five. Little did I know that riding a train would have such an impact on my life. I have ridden the train nearly everyday for the past four years while going to school. I graduate this year but, with my luck, I'll probably be still riding the train into Chicago from Zion by the time this is read. Either that or I'll be shouting, "I missed it!" **Chris Seibel**

Avery, a boy in my third grade class, tied an Ace bandage around his arm and hand and used my sympathy for him to trick me into writing up all his assignments. By the time the recess bell rang, my fingers were aching. I had been working at dual speed all day to make sure that both of our assignments were handed in on time. When I found out that it was just a cheap scam—and the reason for that day's spurts of laughter, it was too late, I was hooked. I wanted to be a writer.
Olandrian Glasper

For juicy details and salacious gossip about my life, y'all are gonna have to wait until my autobiography, which I plan to write when I'm sixty or so. For now, let it be known that I've been fighting against daunting odds—and suffering premature hair loss—in a quest to turn the Columbia Chronicle into a paper that doesn't suck and, it seems to be working. I'll be graduating in January of 1996 and, if you are the editor of a Chicago newspaper or magazine, you're likely to hear from me between now and then.
Sergio Baretto

designed by Georgine Panko

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